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# FRIENDLY ADVICE TO PROTESTANTS: OR, AN ESSAY TOWARDS Comprehending and Uniting OF ALL *PROTESTANT DISSENTERS* TO THE Church of England:

HUMBLY

Offer'd to the Conſideration of this preſent PARLIAMENT, as the beſt Expedient of this time to ſecure the Safety, Honour, and Welfare of the KING and Kingdom

By a Sober Proteſtant.

*LONDON*,

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TO THE

# Courteous Reader.

Courteous Reader,

*I Intreat you to peruſe with a mild, a moderate, and a Chriſtian Temper, theſe few ſheets which have been thought fit to be recommended to the publick view; as well to give a full proſpect of the Jeſuitical Deſigns againſt us and our Religion, as to perſuade our Brethren to that Unity and Uniformity, which will ſecure us againſt all their Helliſh Attempts. This Invitation will appear ſo much the more ſeaſonable, becauſe we are yet threatned with ſtrong Combinations, with mighty Conſpiracies, with the Conjunction of Forcign Powers, that promiſe to themſelves the overthrow of Chriſt's Goſpel and Truth amongſt us. Methinks that the greatneſs of the Common Danger in which we are all concern'd, ſhould Alarm us into a compliance with one another, and oblige us to joyn to maintain that Profeſſion, which our Enemies joyntly ſtrike at: Methinks their Policy ſhould teach us, how to preſerve our ſelves, and cauſe us to unite alſo in Affections, in Gods Worſhip, in our Cares and Endeavours for the Publick Safety, for the prevention of their miſchievous purpoſes, too much encouraged by our groundleſs and unreaſonable Diviſions.*

*In this juncture of time, the Nations welfare and preſervation hath ſuch a dependency upon this Conjunction, that we can never expect it without this reconciliation. It is the*

*Unity of the people that will render us invincible, and draw down upon our heads the Bleſſing of Heaven: The ſafeſt Defence of States and Kingdoms. It will eſtabliſh Religion upon an unmoveable Baſis, and maintain the envied Hierarchy of our Church in the midſt of all Diſorders. It will prevent many wicked Deſigns of the Pope and his bloody Agents, and ſilence the jealouſies and tumultuous fears that diſturb our quiet. In a word, Unity in Religion and Gods Worſhip, will preſerve the Nations Peace from Foreign Invaſion, and Inteſtine diſcords. If therefore our Brethren of the ſame Religion, who differ from us only in ſhadows, would hearken at laſt to this Reconciliation, and joyn with us at leaſt in outward appearance: If they would conſent to lay aſide all prejudice and partiality, and baniſh from among us all names of diſſention, innumerable advantages would from thence proceed, and this happy Conjunction would infallibly prove the moſt Invincible Bulwark of our Church and Nation, againſt the malice of Hell, and the Popes fury. In order thereunto, ſeveral particulars are here recommended to the publick view, to diſpoſe mens minds for this bleſſed unity in Religion, and prepare them for a Cure.*

*But as there are diſtempers which the Patients frowardneſs, and other circumſtances will not ſuffer to be healed by every common Phyſitian, the grand diſeaſe of our Nation is ſuch, that only the Wiſdom of our Superiours, can compleat the cure, and cloſe up our bleeding wounds, torn and inlarged through our Enemies ſubtil practices.*

*Several endeavours have been formerly made for the ſame purpoſe, but ſucceſs hath not anſwered the expectations of good men, becauſe their Judicious and Religious proceedings have been fruſtrate, as ſome imagin, through the unſeaſonableneſs and ſharpneſs of the Remedies, or the untractableneſs of intereſſed*

*tereſſed perſons, or rather, through the ſecret Plots of our buſy Enemies, who lay in our boſoms, and had a finger in our actings of this nature.*

*But now theſe obſtacles are partly removed, now the greatneſs of our danger hath alarm'd many into a compliance with our Church, and begot in us an earneſt deſire of a Conjunction, we only wait for an Invitation and the perfecting of that Union, which will render us and our poſterity happy for ever.*

*I ſhall deſire from all True Proteſtants a favourable acceptance of, and a charitable conſtruction to theſe my endeavours, which I hope will prevail upon men of calm ſpirits, and unbiaſſed judgments, my zeal and affection for the ſervice of my Country, and for the preſervation of the true Religion, for which I have been a ſufferer, hath encouraged me to this Attempt, Who knows, but that theſe conſiderations that I here offer, may prevail upon many, may ſatisfie their doubting Conſciences, and oblige them to ſtudy for the future, Unity and Peace? Who knows, but that a Perſon though in a mean Station, may contribute ſomething towards that Bleſſed Work of Uniting us and our Brethren together? For it is the uſual Method of Divine Providence, to make uſe of the unlikelieſt Agents, to bring to paſs the great Deſigns, and the noble effects of his Power and Wiſdome, that the Glory might be aſcribed to him alone, and that none might partake with him in that which is all his due.*

*I beſeech the God of all Wiſdom, Unity and Peace, to unite us all together, to reconcile our differences, to enlighten our underſtandings with his Truth, ſanctifie our wills and affections with his Spirit of Love. I beſeech His Divine Majeſty to preſerve in health and proſperity, our gracious and religious King, and bleſs the zealous endeavours of the wiſe and great*

*Council*

*Council of our Nation, for his Glory and the Nations Welfare. This ſhall always be the Prayer of*

M. D.

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# A *SEASONABLE ADVICE* TO ALL True Protestants IN ENGLAND, IN This present posture of Affairs.

## CHAP. I.

*The Conſpiracy and preſent Deſigns of the Popiſh Party in* Europe, *againſt the Proteſtant Intereſt diſcovered, with the methods obſerved by them to overthrow the Church of* England.

THE true Chriſtian Faith in all Ages hath been endangered by the cruelties and furious perſecutions of the Devil and his Helliſh Agents. Since the Murther of the Divine Author of this Excellent Religion, there is no Age nor Kingdom but hath ſeen multitudes of his ſincere Followers, ſent after their Good Maſter. How furiouſly did the Phariſees rage againſt the Apoſtles! how barbarouſly did they handle the firſt Chriſtians! how many Conſultations and Attempts to ſtifle this Religion in its Infancy, in the Rivers and Torrents

of the Blood of its Profeſſors! And when by S. *Paul*'s Preaching the Truth was generally known and embraced all over the *Roman* Empire, how many Maſſacres and Tragedies have been acted upon Chriſtians! As it is not poſſible to deſcribe the inhumanities of *Nero*, *Domitian*, *Dioclesian*, and other *Cæſars*: it is impoſſible to declare the number of *Chriſt*'s Diſciples, murdered in all parts of their Dominions, in every Town and Hamlet, and in every Province, fire and ſword, miſery and torments were the portions of all that were ſo bold as to own this ſacred Name.

Afterwards when by the goodneſs of God, the *Roman* Emperors began to open their Eyes and perceive the Divinity of this Faith, when they began to draw the whole World by their Religious Examples, to worſhip a Crucified Saviour; the Devil (whoſe Empire was thereby overthrown) took other meaſures, and an other courſe to deſtroy Chriſtianity, and hinder its progreſs amongſt men. Inſtead of oppoſing the whole Body of it, which had gained an invincible credit in the World, he reſolved to pick quarrels with ſome of its Doctrines, and to poyſon the Hypocritical Profeſſors, with ſuch pernicious perſuaſions, as might ſpread to the forming of a Party for himſelf. No ſooner did the Primitive Chriſtians come out of the Heatheniſh Perſecutions, but this grand Enemy of all Truth and Piety advanced amongſt them the Hereſies of *Arius*, *Apollinarius*, *Neſtorius*, *Novatus*, *Pelagius*, and others of his Champions, who either by ſubtilty or cruelty aſſaulted again *Chriſt*'s Church afreſh, and raiſed perſecutions againſt her in her very bowels. But Satan's Malice was never ſo remarkable, nor the Sufferings of the Church never ſo many, nor the Plots and Combinations againſt her never ſo frequent, under the Governments of the *Jews* and *Romans*; as they have been ſince the Apoſtacy of the *Roman* Church from Chriſts true Faith, and its reception of the antient Hereſies. The Devils Throne eſtabliſhed in the Old Capitol, ſeems to be now tranſferred to the infamous Vatican of *Rome*, the antient abode of the Whores, and the now Seat of the Great Whore of *Babylon*: for from this place it is impoſſible to number the Decrees and Commiſſions that have been ſent to murder, deſtroy, burn, and overthrow *Chriſt*'s true Church on Earth. How many Wars have been kindled! how many Maſſacres acted! how many Plots ſet on foot! how many Cruelties and Tragedies have proceeded from the Reſolutions

*Corn. Tacit. lib. 2. in fine Vitel. Imperij.*

tions and Orders of the Vatican? In all Ages and Kingdoms of our Northern-World, the *Roman* Party was never wanting in any bloudy Scene to deſtroy *Chriſt*'s Diſciples. It is obſervable that for above ſeven hundred years, there hath ſcarce been a War in *Europe*, but the Pope of *Rome* hath been the firſt Contriver, and greateſt Promoter of it, chiefly when *Chriſt*'s Church and People were concerned. For it hath always been the Policy of the *Roman* Court, when the Princes of *Europe* were grown ſo Rich or Great as to give them a Jealouſie, to ſtir them up by their *Nuncios* to ſome chargeable and dangerous War, or to raiſe againſt them their diſcontented Neighbours. And ſince the Reformation hath ſeparated from them a part of *Europe*, all the Proteſtant Blood that hath been ſpilt, may be charged upon the Pope and his Agents. How many millions in *France*, *Germany*, *Spain*, and other parts of *Europe* have been ſlain by the Papiſts! How many private Maſſacres and publick Wars have been begun and encouraged by them! I dare aſſert, and offer my ſelf to prove from a certain knowledge of the Hiſtories of former Ages, that in this Northern World ſince the firſt Reformation, the Pope and his Papiſts have been ſo great Enemies of the Peace of *Chriſtendom*, that there hath been no War kindled, nor ſcarce any Bloody Scene acted by any Authority, nor any noted Wickedneſs performed, but the Pope had there a hand, and was concerned as one of the chief Actors. This unreconcileable hatred which he bears to *Chriſt*'s Church and his Goſpel, inrages him and all his reſtleſs Agents, againſt this flouriſhing and happy Kingdom. Since the beginning of Queen *Elizabeths* Reign, how many hundred Plots and Conſpiracies have been ſet on foot by the Papiſts againſt the Lives of our Kings and Princes, and the Peace of this Nation! This Land ſeems to have been the chiefeſt Theater of their Cruelty and private Conſpiracies. As ſoon as by the Goodneſs of God one Plot is diſappointed, another is immediately begun and advanced, to trouble this Kingdom. I ſhall not mention here the former Diſcoveries, that have been made of the Popes deſigns againſt us, of our danger in Eighty Eight, of the Gunpowder-Plot, of our late Civil Wars, of our Royal Martyrs Murder, of the Noble Blood that hath been privately ſpilt, and of our unreconcileable differences in Religion, known to be fomented by the Pope and Papiſts, and many other of their contrivances within theſe few years, tending to diſquiet and diſturb *Chriſt*'s Church amongſt us. I ſhall in this ſhort Tract give an Account only of the preſent deſigns of the Papiſts againſt the Proteſtant

Religion in *Europe*, from certain and well grounded Intelligence, that I have had with worthy men of the Popiſh Religion, and the Acquaintance that I have deſired to get in the Affairs of *Europe* within theſe twenty years: I ſhall here give a proſpect of a private Conſultation and a crafty Contrivance, which hath cauſed already much Chriſtian Blood to be ſpilt in all parts of *Europe*, and God knows how much more the carrying on of theſe deſigns will coſt: God knows what miſeries and afflictions it will bring upon us. For the prevention of the miſchiefs intended againſt us in this Land, and our Proteſtant Religion; I here offer this Diſcovery to the Publick, or as much as is neceſſary to be known. I pray God that our Brethren of the ſame Religion would ſeriouſly conſider it, ſo as to reunite again with us in the ſincere profeſſion of the Truth and Worſhip of our God, that our Enemies may not advantage themſelves by our diviſions; for this purpoſe I ſhall ſhew what this Popiſh Deſign is, by whom commenced, and who are chiefly concerned.

*Alexander* the Seventh, of the Family of *Chigi* was looked upon as one of the greateſt Politicians of his days. As ſoon as he was ſetled in his Papacy, he ſent his *Nuncios* into *France*, *Germany* and *Spain*, to reconcile the Popiſh Princes, and to conclude between them ſuch a League as that they might be able to ſuppreſs the *Calviniſts* at home, and oppoſe together the *Turk* abroad. The differences between the *French* and the *Spaniards* were compoſed, by the Marriage of the eldeſt *Infanta* of *Spain* with *Lewis* the Fourteenth, the yongeſt being given to the Emperor, the Chief of the Houſe of *Auſtria*. This Peace gave leaſure to the *French* Court, and an opportunity to the Pope and his Agents to Work and Solicit the Ruin of the Proteſtants, by pulling down their Churches, and denying them the priviledges allowed them before. Several ways were then propoſed in the Aſſembly of Cardinals, anſwerable to the ſtate of every Kingdom. *England* was then groaning under the Tyranny of an Uſurper dreadful to all *Europe*; but a Religion was then here profeſſed in oppoſition to Popery: The Kings Majeſty was in his Baniſhment. It was therefore reſolved to get here ſuch an Intereſt in the Army and in the Land, as that the Papiſts might be able to make a ſtrong party, when time ſhould ſerve: for that purpoſe, ſeveral Jeſuits were ſent over to ſet up new Religions and divide the people amongſt themſelves, and to joyn with the Army, into which they were admitted in Offices of Truſt under their uſual diſguiſes. A propoſal had been made to our Gracious Soveraign to draw him from the Truth, with large

large hopes of an univerſal aſſiſtance of the foreign Papiſts, in ſuch a caſe to ſettle him again in his Throne: but he was not to be drawn to be the Popes Slave in hopes of a Crown, nor to be perſwaded to embrace ſuch abſurdities againſt his Conſcience and Reaſon. God therefore performed for him what his Enemies had but propoſed, and reſtored to him his inheritance, as a reward of his Fidelity to Truth, contrary to the whole Worlds expectation. When the Court of *Rome* ſaw ſo great a revolution in this Kingdom, and the Proteſtant Religion ſucceeding to the former Anarchy in the Church, when they ſaw no hopes of that Change they wiſhed for, they ſent as many Emiſſaries as they could to ſow the ſeeds of diviſion amongſt us and our brethren of the ſame perſwaſion, for the carrying on of their damnable deſigns, the ruin of our Kingdom and Church; againſt which they planted all their Engins. A Conſultation was regularly had in *London* of the moſt experienced and wiſeſt Jeſuits, who had intelligence with moſt parts of the Kingdom, and knew by Letters the poſture of all Affairs, and the Peoples diſpoſitions: The reſult was ſent over to their General at *Rome*, and the Aſſembly appointed there for *Engliſh* Affairs: From thence they received every month new Orders how to proceed, which Orders they had a general Commiſſion to correct according to the unexpected accidents that might happen.

During the late Civil War and Uſurpation, the Jeſuit had got many Proſelytes to his Religion by drawing them from the Truth, or cauſing ſome to caſt off all reſpect of any other Religion, but that which their ſordid Intereſt recommended. The Wicked and Antichriſtian Principle of the former, and the prophaneſs and licentiouſneſs of the latter, made them both ready to embrace Popery, as ſoon as it ſhould appear with any credit amongſt us; but all this while the Knave lurked under the ſhape of an Anabaptiſt, of a Quaker, of a Fift-Monarchy man, and ſometimes for his Intereſt he would appear amongſt the Presbyterians and Independents. The ſeverity of the antient Laws, and the Peoples general hatred of Popery and Jeſuits, ſuffered him not to lift up his Maſk: therefore all his proceedings were private and ſecret, and under ſuch outward garbs, as hindred him from being viſible to every eye.

But as ſoon as the Kings Majeſty returned to his Crown and Kingdom, the Jeſuits and Papiſts were reſolved to take other meaſures: The ſervices of ſome of their Party, and the Authority of Crowned Heads emboldned them to appear amongſt us with more Courage and leſs

Fear of the Law, which by the King's merciful temper was mitigated towards them, and they ſuffered to make profeſſion of their Religion without fear of puniſhment: All that they ſeemed then to deſire and pretend to was but the freedom to exerciſe their Religion, *but give the Devil an Inch and he will take an Ell.* Their ſecret aim and private contrivances have always tended to the overthrow of Church and State, for the better carrying on of their purpoſes, they have endeavoured to have all the Intereſt they could make amongſt the great ones.

There was then three obſtacles to their grand Deſign not to be overcome on a ſudden: The Kings reality in the Proteſtant Profeſſion, the Nations general averſion for Popery, ſome out of Intereſt and for Fear of loſing their Impropriations and Abbey-Lands; others out of a principle of Religion, and the third obſtacle was the Parliaments Sincerity and Loyalty to God and their King. To attempt openly to overcome theſe impediments was but a madneſs, which could not turn but to their ruin. They found out a way to batter theſe invincible Bulwarks, and if not to render them aſſaultable, at leaſt to prevent the danger they apprehended from thence, the Peoples averſion they took away by degrees, by their officious and kind behaviour, civil deportment, and uſual profeſſions of fidelity to their Prince, and care of the publick ſafety, honour and happineſs: by ſpreading abroad both in the Countrey and the City, Books of their Religion with moderate Diſputations and Refutations of ours, which they gave to all that would hearken to them, or ſhew them any countenance or likelihood of embracing their ways: and by ſettling of Popiſh School-Maſters in every corner of the City, who endeavoured if not to poiſon the Children with their principles, at leaſt to give them ſuch a tincture of their Religion, as might remove the natural averſion. They dealt with every one according to his quality, diſpoſition and place. To the Great and Noble they ſeemed to be true, truſty and officious, to the meaner ſort they appeared with hopes and promiſes of advantage: and to all they diſcovered the Popiſh Religion under the diſguiſes of pleaſure and profit; as many as were not well principled they endeavoured to debauch and corrupt, chiefly if they were in any place of truſt, that they might ſhew themſelves favourable to Popery and Papiſts. Some they would recommend and promote to places of profit, to Offices and Employments in Noble Families, and in the State; to others they would give monies, and with all perſons they endeavoured to ingratiate themſelves: caſting all the miſery and

troubles

troubles of our Civil War upon Presbyterians, Reformation, and Non-conformity, to render them the more odious to King and People. One thing gave them a jealouſie, and they were reſolved to employ all their Skill and Art to prevent it; That was a reconciliation between the Epiſcopal Party and the moderate Non-Conformiſts, endeavoured by the Kings Majeſty, and deſired by the whole Nation. To hinder this conjunction, which doubtleſs would have proved fatal to Popery in this Land, and break the neck of all their deſigns, they laboured to interpoſe between both, and to incourage the one in his ſtifneſs, by buzing in the ears of the ſimpler ſort the danger of unity, the corruption in the Church, the glory of Conſtancy in Religion, and their ingagements for the Covenant: and by upbraiding the more knowing party with the Peoples diſcourſes of the Miniſters bad Lives, unfaithfulneſs, unconſtancy, and the danger their Souls were in, if by their too haſty compliance to that which their former Intereſt obliged them to exclaim againſt, they gave them a ſlender Opinion and an Atheiſtical impreſſion of Religion it ſelf. To theſe they repreſented Conformity as the moſt intolerable burthen, and the heavieſt yoke could be impoſed upon them by Authority; and our Religion of the Church of *England* the neareſt in affinity to Popery, full of Superſtition, if not of Idolatry. They accuſed all our zealous endeavours to bring the People to Unity, to be Perſecutions of the good Servants of God, and every ſtep that we made was ſlandered and diſcredited by theſe men who had a deſign to advantage themſelves by our Diviſions. To the Governours in the Church and State they would exclaim againſt the wickedneſs and danger of Conventicles and Non-Conformity. They repreſented all the Reformed Churches beyond the Seas, as incouragers of our diſſenſions by their Examples, and Government without Biſhops; *Calvin* and all his *Calviniſts* were Traitors, Schiſmaticks, Hereticks, Enemies of the Publick Peace, promoters of Rebellion, inſufferable in a Common-Wealth, dangerous Conſpirators againſt the Kings Perſon and Government; and what not. With theſe and ſuch like Notions they infected the minds of many of our Clergy, with an unjuſt prejudice againſt all the Religious Churches of God beyond the Seas, and had not a very worthy Divine, [ Dr. *Durel*, ] cleared their innocency by repreſenting to the publick, their diſallowance of our frivolous diſcords, and their acknowledgment of us for their Brethren, and our Liturgy and Government, to be altogether agreeable with Gods Word and Will; we ſhould have

have proceeded to a publick Excommunication. However these impressions given to the Rulers in Church and State, cast oyl into the fire, angred the minds of our zealous Governours, and drew from them those severe resolutions which have increased our discords, and caused many to imagin more in Non-Conformity than really there is, for as some sort of Wounds putrifie and increase the more they are handled, so the Divisions of our Church about quid dities, Indifferencies, Trifles and Vanities, would have vanished by degrees the less we had minded them. But as we had our Enemies on both sides acquainted with our temper and interests, they would not suffer the one to conform, nor the others to admit them upon more moderate terms, than a strict compliance with all the inconsiderable punctilio's which the Publick Peace and Gods Glory might easily dispense with, as well as Religion, Government and Conformity it self. In all the publick Disputations too much Gall proceeded from the Jesuits hatred of us both, and their apprehension of our sensibleness of our own Interest, and of an union between those that differed for the most part but in shadows. However they laboured to raise such a mist between us and our Brethren, that we could not see to joyn together in one body and worship. All this while they advanced some of their own disguised fellows into Offices and Places of Trust; and when they saw any person able to serve their turn, they would befriend him with their assistance in his promotion, and discourage all other persons. When I lived near *London*, a Jesuit an ingenious and a good Linguist, knowing my Skill in that and other sorts of Learning, and how much I had been neglected in the Church; though I had done good Service both at home and abroad, was sent purposely to search into the Principles of my Religion, whether I would favour Popery: could I have dissembled with him, I might have had a considerable preferment by the Jesuits means, but I chose rather to abide in a mean condition,and to be confined to the remotest wilderness of the Land, to a small Vicarage of about sixty pounds *per annum*, there to bury my Talents, than to employ them in the Service of the Devil and the Pope.

But all these indeavours at home, tended to the promotion, encouragement, and increase of the Popish Religion, but amongst a few, and such as dared not to discover what they were. And though it had got so much credit, that many ingenious and good Protestants could not endure to hear the Pope or Papists spoken against, or blamed for

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ſuperſtition, or any of their practices. This could not bring to paſs the grand Deſign without a more powerful endeavour, and ſtronger aſſiſtances; for that purpoſe as ſoon as the Court of *Rome* was perfectly reconciled with the *French* King, and that he had conſented to gratifie them, to have the Monument of their Diſgrace taken away, and all remembrances of his Ambaſſadors affront and their weakneſſes, pulled down in *Rome*: they reſolved to make uſe of his Aſſiſtance, and to govern all *Europe*, if not all the World, by a *Triumvirat*. I ſhall not trouble my Reader with any part of this Plot relating to Foreign Affairs, only as it looks upon us and concerns us here in *England*.

It is ſufficiently known that the Court of *Rome* pretends to an Univerſal Monarchy, and to hold by the Power of the Keys what the ſame City governed heretofore by the Sword. The Jeſuits likewiſe have the ſame aim, but with a pretended ſubordination to the Pope and his Authority; a meer pretence covered over with the Oath of blind Obedience, for this crafty and deviliſh Society, if it once get a Head will as eaſily forget their Allegiance to the Pope, as they do now that to their moſt lawful Princes under God. But neither the Jeſuits nor the Pope of *Rome*, now that all their Cheats have been diſcovered to the World in theſe latter Ages, through the Preaching of the Goſpel, can carry on or compaſs ſo great a Deſign without other aſſiſtance, therefore they reſolved together to employ the old Policy of the antient *Romans* in Conquering Kingdoms, which was to ſubdue them with their Weapons, and by the Courage of their own Inhabitants.

Of all the Monarchs ſubject to the *Roman* See, in the end of *Alexander*'s Papacy, none ſeemed ſo powerful in men and money as the *French*: A young Prince Lord of a flouriſhing Kingdom, and of a great Continent, but of an Aſpiring mind that would readily entertain the firſt propoſals of larger Dominions, and other Empires. Therefore the Jeſuits and the Pope, agreed to tempt him with the Glories of the World, and to make him the Univerſal Monarch, if he would encourage the Popiſh Religion, and declare himſelf an Enemy to the Proteſtant Profeſſion in and out of his Kingdom. This ſame Propoſal had been made to *Philip* the Second of *Spain*, when that Kingdom was in its Grandeur; and in order to its accompliſhment, he gratified the Pope with the Expulſion and Baniſhment of the *Moors* out of his Kingdom, with a Bloody War in the *Low-Countries*, and with the Maſſacre of his Eldeſt Son and Heir Don *Carlos*, a young Prince who diſcovered his

diſlike of the Bloody Deſigns of the Papiſts of his days. But ſince the States of *Europe* have laboured to cut the *Spaniards* Short, and to bring down their haughty pretenſions, they have ſcarce been able to keep their own without their Neighbours Charitable Aſſiſtance, much leſs to invade the other Kingdoms and Territories of Europe, in gratification of the Court of *Rome*. But the *French* Monarch eſteemed the richeſt Prince of all *Europe*, raiſed to a Powerful and Large Kingdom, was become dreadful to all his Neighbors whiles he ſtood ſtill. He ſeemed therefore to be the fitteſt Inſtrument to carry on the Popiſh Deſigns in *Europe* and in *England*, and able to ſuppreſs the Proteſtant Religion every where. This was the *French* aim in the laſt *Dutch* War, as may appear by the words of their Embaſſadors to all Popiſh Princes, chiefly in *Germany* and *Spain*: And in conſideration of this War, the Pope was willing to gratifie the *French* King in all his demands, in making thoſe men Cardinals whom he had recommended to him. And likewiſe to ſhew his readineſs to cruſh the Proteſtant Party, the *French* King to pleaſe the Pope, hath pulled down ſeveral hundred Churches, and oppreſſed the Proteſtants of his Dominions contrary to his former Grants and Promiſes. I could inſtance ſeveral known proofs of this Agreement between the Pope, the Jeſuits, and the *French* King, to govern the World between them, and to aſſiſt one another in the ſubduing *Europe*, and in Ruling it by this *Triumvirat*. The Pope was to have the Souls, and command the Conſciences of men to furniſh him and his minions with what moneys they would have. The *French* King was to Govern the Bodies and command their Eſtates. And the Jeſuits by a compliance with them both, were to have a large ſhare in the Conquered Countreys and a great part in the Government of the World. The *Dutch* a ſturdy generation and powerful by Sea ſtood in their way, theſe muſt be oppreſſed by a Nation no leſs valiant and ſtrong: it was no difficult matter to blow up the Coals and kindle a War. The uncivility of the former furniſhing daily cauſes of diſcontent to the latter; but when the growing greatneſs of the *French* diſcovered to us our own danger, and that our Prince became the Moderator of Peace and War, ſtopping this furious Champion in his full Career, it is not to be imagin'd what diſpleaſure the Popiſh Party conceived againſt our King and Nation: what threatning ſpeeches, what furious expreſſions dropt from their mouths. The Emperor only and the *Spaniard* no Friend of the *French* Greatneſs, would have been willing to aſſiſt the Pope, if only

Religion

Religion had been concerned; but when they had an inkling of the Triumvirat, and ſaw to what all theſe proceedings would abutt, they choſe rather to aid the Hereticks againſt their Pope, than to ſuffer them to increaſe their Enemies Power and Greatneſs.

But ſeeing that Proteſtant *England* would not ſuffer the Pope and the *French* to triumph over all their Neighbours, but give a check to their proceedings: a Peace muſt be concluded with the *Dutch* Hereticks, that they might have more leaſure to work miſchief to and overthrow this ſtrongeſt Bulwark of the Proteſtant Religion. Open War was dangerous againſt a Nation ſo Couragious, therefore private Plots and ſecret Conſpiracies muſt do: They had no other way but to caſt us into a confuſion by a ſudden attempt, and the Maſſacre of our Prince and of his Subjects; and to animate us one againſt another. The Father muſt be ſtirred up againſt the Son, the Children muſt riſe againſt their Parents, Relations and Affinity, Conſanguinity, and the ties of Friendſhip and Blood muſt be all ſet aſide to promote the Intereſt of this Catholick Religion, and Holy Cauſe ſanctified by the Popes Benediction.

The burning of the City of *London* could not deſtroy that Neſt of Hereticks, they muſt there be all Maſſacred therefore in their famous City that is ſo ſoon riſen out of its Aſhes to the wonder of the World. No pitty nor compaſſion muſt be had of innocent babes, who might one day revenge the murder of their Parents, but they muſt all, the Mother and the Child, feel the ſtroaks and ſharp ſwords of theſe zealous followers of *Jeſus*, of theſe Roman Catholicks and Jeſuits. But how far did their fury intend to run? God knows. Once the name of a Proteſtant muſt not be left alive in all *England*: Blood and Rivers of Blood muſt be ſpilt to make way for a Religious Generation of Jeſuits, Franciſcans, Jacobins and other Fryers to plant in this Land and ſecure it for the Pope their Sovereign. Kings and Princes, Nobles and Clergy, Gentry and Commonalty, muſt all be witneſſes of their impartial zeal; the whole Nation muſt be deſtroyed. O Inhumanity! O Hellish Fury! O unheard of Cruelty! Bleſſed be thy Holy Name, O Lord our God, for the diſcovery of their malice and rage againſt us, continue thy Protection to our gracious Prince, guard him by thine Almighty Power, ſecure his perſon againſt all preſent and future Conſpiracies, preſerve thy People and this Church, and ſend us all to be truly thankful, and to reunite again in the ſincere worſhip of thee the only true God, for *Jeſus Chriſt* his ſake. *Amen.* This Plot hath been working many years.

and preparations were making in all the Convents upon the Sea-Coasts of *Spain* and *France*, chiefly of the Jesuits. But that which is the end of all this Discourse is, that if we had not been divided in Religion the Papists would not have made this attempt, and we should be infallibly secure from all future mischiefs, (which they will yet endeavour to work amongst us) if we could be perswaded to set aside all Partiality and Prejudice, and joyn together all unanimously in the profession of one Religion, and in the same manner. This I shall prove in the next Chapter.

## CHAP. II.

### *The danger of Division in a Nation about matters of Religion, and what pernicious consequences it hath had in foreign Countries, and in this.*

THE chief intent of all Societies of men is Union, and the Publick Security, against all invasion and disorder, forcign and domestick. For that purpose we gather together in one Body and under one Head: we bind our selves together with Laws and Relations, we entertain a mutual correspondency amongst our selves, and pretend all to promote the general good of the politick Body. Nations are to be looked upon as large Families where the Universal Father, and all the rest are members of the Family, highly concerned in one anothers good and preservation. All the individuals are united in one publick interest in the happiness of the whole or division: therefore discord is an apparent enemy to the Society, because it opposes the very intent of it, and lays open a Nation to these following mischiefs, and to their dismal consequences.

I. It weakens the Society and People, and renders them less able to resist their Enemies; It is not to be imagined what inconveniency a small division will cause in a City or Common-wealth. As in the natural body a head-ach or a light distemper renders the man feeble and not fit for action, so the publick divisions bring great impediments to those proceedings that would tend to the Nations happiness, honour, safety and peace: and ought to be so much the more odious the more a well com-

compact and ſetled body in good order and temper is in a thriving and proſperous condition.

II. It breeds diſcontents and diſturbances at home, which if kept ſecret, occaſions murmurings and complaints amongſt the inferiors, and many times when they break out they raiſe Rebellions and Civil-Wars. for it is certain that there can be no diviſion or faction in a place but muſt proceed from and cauſe diſcontent, hatred and variance, which commonly rob from us our inward and outward peace. And though the Diviſion may be only in ſome particular reſpects, which may not hinder a correſpondency in other publick relations, that correſpondency can never be hearty, and thoſe endeavours together cannot be ſo ſucceſsful and vigorous, when they proceed from parties, that entertain mutual diſpleaſures, eſpecially in that very thing which is the greateſt tye of all human Societies, Religion.

III. It lays us open to all the attempts, contrivances and malicious deſigns of our Enemies. How eaſie is it to ruin a divided party! to ſet and incourage one faction againſt another! And though the diviſion may obſerve ſome bounds, and not proceed to that extremity to which it naturally tends, it cannot be denied but that a crafty Enemy may eaſily advantage himſelf thereby, and work the miſchief if not the total overthrow of a divided People, for there are alwaies opportunities given for ſuch wicked purpoſes by the diſcovery of this weakneſs. In ſhort, that Nation is in no ſmall danger, and the miſchiefs into which it is likely to fall are innumerable, that is divided in ſuch a manner, that there is no hopes of union. Our Bleſſed Saviour foretells the fate of that Society or Houſe, that it cannot ſtand, but muſt needs of its own accord fall into ruin.

But of all diviſions, thoſe about Religion ſeem to be the moſt unnatural, unreaſonable and ominous: factions and parties in the State may be tolerated when they aim not directly at the diſſolution of Government, nor the diſcredit or oppoſition of Authority; in ſuch a caſe they are not ſo dangerous nor of that ill conſequence as to give us an hot Alarm. And though they may diminiſh of that Love and Reſpect that is due to our Sovereign, by obliging us to prefer an intereſt not agreeable with his and the Common-wealths, they are not ſo criminal but they may correſpond with our Allegiance to our Prince.

But divisions and factions in Religion in the same Nation, threaten us with those unavoidable dangers, that make Governours take heed how they tolerate that which is against all policy: chiefly in those Kingdoms as are surrounded with watchful Enemies, that wait for such an opportunity to insinuate themselves and undermine us. They tend to the dissolution of the Government, the overthrow of the Laws, the introducing of all disorder in the State as well as in the Church. They tend first to the contempt of Authority, and next to the ruin of mens Bodies and Souls, leaving us naked to the first attempts of all our spiritual and temporal Enemies, chiefly when that division which is envied and aimed at, is so twisted with the Government of the Commonwealth, that there is no dissolution of the one without the danger of the other; when all the other divisions rise in opposition to it, and will admit of no compliance with it, when openly and secretly they labor to discredit it and its lawful proceedings, incouraging the Factious part to exclaim against it and its injunctions, and to endeavour to draw away the people from their respect to it and its way of worship: what rational Soul can tolerate so palpable an opposition? What Governours in the State can suffer Religion to be contemned and trodden under foot with a publick allowance? Is it reasonable that such dangerous factions should have the liberty to increase and act with the sufferance of the Laws and of the publick Authority? When all the actings and distasts of these factions are not justifiable amongst men of reason, by the Laws of God or the Laws of men, and all are grounded upon prejudices, mistakes and misapprehensions, and such frivolous causes, as they will be one day ashamed to own, when all masks and vizards shall be pulled off. Is it just that the Rulers of the State in such a case should countenance such pernicious proceedings, and give the stamp of Authority to Actions either ridiculous in themselves, or dangerous to the People committed to their charge. The danger may seem less when they are weak and inconsiderable, but little evils are to be shunned and avoided as well as great, though they have not increased to an head, they deserve no allowance, because they are not able to prevail upon the sound part, but should be cured as speedily as may be; in the mean while for the publick peace and quiet, the execution of the Laws is suspended, and by the wisdom of the Governours they are winked at, but all Factions are not to be esteemed by what they can do, but by what they would do. Let the Principles of those that are divided from us be enquired into,

into. let the deſigns of their party be examined, let their tempers and diſpoſitions be tried by an impartial ſcrutiny, and they themſelves will diſcover ſo much danger to the Nation, and find the Government and Kingdom threatned with ſuch miſchiefs, as that they will have no reaſon to incourage ſuch diviſions, whereby their own peace and ſafety is threatned as well as that of their Poſterity. I know Conſcience is the grand Plea of all our diſſenting Brethren; the Papiſt, he pleads Conſcience for the murther of Kings and Princes, and the advancing his Religion by Helliſh Plots and Contrivances. The Heathen he pleads Conſcience in the worſhip of his Idols. The Jew and the Mahumetan faith he obſerves the Rules and Dictates of his Conſcience: and our Brethren have the ſame pretence in their mouths, for their oppoſition of Lawful Authority, and their incouragement in their diviſion from us. But this plea that is ſo commonly uſed in the juſtifying of the greateſt villanies, cauſeth us with good reaſon to ſuſpect it in leſs matters. Remember, O my Chriſtian Brother and Siſter, when thou ſhalt appear before the Impartial Tribunal of the Lord *Jeſus*, this pretence of thy Conſcience will not be able to ſanctifie thee, and cauſe him to approve of Actions and Proceedings directly oppoſite to his Word and Holy-Laws. Though it may blind thine own eyes and cauſe thee to be more excuſable before men, than if thou didſt act againſt the ſollicitations of thy Conſcience: it will never be able to oblige him to allow of that which is evil in it ſelf, to juſtifie the guilty and condemn the innocent. Take heed I beſeech thee that what thou ſayeſt is Conſcience be not invincible prejudice and hatred, or humor and groundleſs fancy, or it may be ſomething worſe, that ſtrong ſpirit of deluſion unto which God delivers ſuch as will not be lovers of the Truth. For the better diſcovery of the miſtakes of thy Conſcience in this particular, I beſeech you my Chriſtian Brethren, to examin what miſchiefs ſuch diviſion about Religion have cauſed already in Foreign Nations and in this: the Hiſtories of former Ages are full of ſad accidents, murthers and wars, deſtructions and calamities of Countries cauſed by the diſputes about Religion.

The Kingdom of the *Jews* flouriſhed and grew invincible under the Government of *David* and his Poſterity; ſo that all the Nations round about paid them Tribute. They might have ſtill continued in that happy condition, and been able to ſet bounds to the ſpreading Empire of *Babylon*, had not *Jeroboam* under a pretence of Religion divided the Kingdom

Kingdom and Nation of *Israel*, and to save the People the trouble and expence of going up to *Jerusalem*, set up the Golden Calves in *Dan* and *Bethel*. But how many evils did this division in Religion and Government cause in that Land! They were subject to the affronts of every petty King and contemptible Nation, and at last were overthrown by their Neighbours, and themselves carried away into Captivity, with their Wives and Children.

After the *Jews* return from *Babylon* they grew numerous and strong in the *Romans* time, and were able through their numbers and the resolution and courage which the principle of Religion put into them, to command the *East* part of the World. But what and how much woe and misery did their Factions and Sects draw upon them! what sad Destructions not to be paralel'd in any other Nation! It was openly confessed by *Titus* and their *Roman* Conquerors, that as their divisions between their Princes gave *Pompey* footing in their Countrey, their divisions had brought them to utter ruin, and unheard of miseries; for by this means they became instrumental in their own overthrow, and did more mischief to themselves than all the Armies of their Enemies. So that by Division in Religion, this People of *Israel*, who were assisted by Gods Power and Protection, and favoured above all other Nations, brought themselves to be the scum of the World and lost their Land, being dispersed into all parts and Kingdoms.

The fall of the *Roman* Empire was brought to pass by division; for that let in the *Huns*, the *Longobards*, the *Goths*, *Vandals*, and *Visigoths*, and all the *Northern* People into its fruitful borders. The *Grecian* Empire might have stood upon its legs to this very day, had it not been for their senseless divisions in Church and State. The Sects and Heresies of *Arrius*, *Eunomius*, *Novatus*, *Samosatenus* and other busy-bodies, let in the *Turk* and his *Mahomet*, and in the days of the Emperor *Heraclius* when men were so divided and had so disputed all Religion and Truth out of doors, that the simpler and more ignorant sort knew not which to chuse, these wicked divisions gave an occasion to that *Arabian* Impostor to set up a Religion of his own, which he recommended to them with the inviting and pleasing Charms of pleasure and profit: Read but over the divisions and disputes about Religion, in the Cities of *Constantinople*, *Alexandria*, *Antioch*, and in many other places of the *East* Countries, and examin how many thousands have been destroyed! how many cruelties acted! how many calamities brought upon the

the Inhabitants, through their endleſs diſcords in Religion, and you will have cauſe to wonder at their madneſs, to ſtrive for that which forbids them to ſtrive; and to fight for a Religion which diſallows all variance: You will have cauſe to wonder at their inhumanities and extravagancies, they torment themſelves for nothing, and ſhed their own blood contrary to Reaſon and that Religion, for which they did ſo unadviſedly contend. What is become of the *Grecian* Empire now! where are the flouriſhing Churches of Chriſt of *Aſia* and *Africa*! In what condition are the Chriſtians of thoſe parts of the World! under how much miſery, and under what cruel Tyranny do they groan! The contemptible remains of all thoſe Antient Profeſſors of our Religion, are oppreſſed with the *Turkiſh* and *Mooriſh* Bondage. They have loſt all their honour and glory, their wealth, their priviledges, their Countrey and all their preſent happineſs in this life, their Eſtates and their Children are at their Conquerors pleaſure. And though there are ſome yet profeſſing Chriſtianity in thoſe parts of the World, they differ in all reſpects ſo much from what their Forefathers were in former Ages, that they are able to draw tears from the moſt inſenſible Souls, when compared with them: as the building of the ſecond Temple did from the *Jews* returned from *Babylon*, when they ſaw how differing it was from the Glory and Magnificence of the firſt Structure. And all this hath proceeded from this Wicked and Venemous Root, *Diviſion in Religion.*

Look into the latter Ages of the World, and ſee into what confuſion theſe diviſions about Religion have caſt Kingdoms and Cities. The Cities of *Florence*, of *Naples* and *Millain* in *Italy*, have often been watered with the Blood of their Nobleſt Inhabitants, which the diviſions about Religion cauſed to be ſhed. The grand diſputes about the Guelfs and Gibbelins troubled all *Europe*, and murthered more men than the crueleſt Wars. In *Germany* what inhumanities have been committed! In the *Low-Countries*, how many Rivers of Chriſtian Blood have been ſpilt under the pretence of Religion! The *Spaniſh* Maſſacres, the Duke D'*Alva*'s Butcheries, are ſufficiently known to all the World.

In *Africa* amongſt the *Moors* and *Arabians*, the diſputes about their Prophets Impieties and their Falſe Religion, hath cauſed one of their own Writers to ſay, *Hali Ben-Hazel.* a MS. That there is nothing exaſperates more the minds of men one againſt another, than the differing perſwaſions in

Religion. Another of their Authors complains in this manner, O how furiouſly men are ſet againſt one another for ſuch matters as concern not the Prophets honour, nor the eſſential part of our Religion! for in the late revolution of the Empire of *Morocco*, Religion was pretended to deceive the People. In *France* the Factions of the *Albi* and *Nigri*, and the furious tranſports of the Papiſts againſt the Reformed Profeſſors, have often exhauſted the Blood and Treaſure of that Kingdom. In *Switzerland*, how many troubles aroſe from ſmall diviſions in Religion! In the *United Provinces* in our late days, the refined Notions of *Arminius*, and the extravagancies of the *Anabaptiſts*, had almoſt caſt them into a Civil War. In *France* the hot diſputes between *Amyraldus* and *Du Moulin* had cantoned thoſe poor Churches in the midſt of their Enemies, if moderate and wiſe men had not impoſed a ſilence and obliged them to be quiet. In *Bohemia* and *Poland*, what ſtirs and diſturbances have the *Socinians* raiſed! In *Germany*, and the Biſhoprick of *Munſter*, what wickedneſſes have not the Anabaptiſts committed! I ſhould be endleſs, if I reckon'd up all the Miſchiefs, Blood, Tumults, War and Calamities, which ſmall and inconſiderable diſputes about Religion have brought upon men in the Primitive Church, and in theſe latter days. Look only into our own Nation, and conſider the late Tragedies acted by our own Countreymen upon the Perſon of their King and Nobles. Look into the cauſe of their unreaſonable fury, and you ſhall find nothing but their miſtakes about Religion to have thus tranſported and carried them to that exceſs of cruelty and rage. In Queen *Elizabeths* days the Separatiſts began to quarrel with our Diſcipline and Government, and laid a foundation for the *Brownists*, the *Familiſts*, and their Succeſſors, to build their confuſed *Babel*. Their bold Pamphlets in the Queens Reign, and in King *James*'s time, threatned the Nation with the following diſturbances in the State. The reſtleſs Puritans were always bawling in the Peoples ears againſt our Church and its Rulers, and what troubles did they not breed! but all former diſputes were but ſports and plays to the late diſputes about Religion in our Royal Martyrs days; for it is obſervable that when men have wearied themſelves in diſputing about trifles, they try the cauſe and decide the difference a nearer way, with the dint of their ſharp ſwords. This was the end of our unhappy diviſions, we remember yet the late Civil War, the Calamity under which the Land groaned, the Diſorders and Miſeries that we and our Families ſuffered. This my Brethren, proceeded from the

the ſame cauſe which yet you are unadviſedly fond of, and embrace with an invincible tenacity. They were at firſt diſcontented at our Church and Religious Worſhip, they exclaimed continually againſt our formalities and practices; and differed from us in the ſame punctilio's as ſome of you do. They were at firſt as modeſt in all their behaviour towards us, deſiring nothing but liberty and freedom for themſelves and their way of worſhip, but when they had gathered into a head, their pretenſions were ſo high that they would oblige all men to conform and ſubſcribe to all their irregularities and extravagancies. I cannot call to mind the ſad condition of our Church of *England* in thoſe unhappy days without Tears, when our Governours were depoſed, our Clergy baniſhed with their Prince, our Nobility and Gentry ſequeſtred, our Laws obliged to ſubmit to the power of the Sword, our Kingdom and Government in the hands of lawleſs Tyrants; Sects and Diviſions in Religion multiplying every day, and riſing out of the filthy ſpawn of the Jeſuits, the wicked principles which they ſpread amongſt us to diſturb us, and puzle the weaker ſort in the Notions of Religion. All theſe Evils with innumerable others, which we can better remember than ſpeak of, ſprung from your Forefathers Non-Conformity: And will not their Chidren be better adviſed! will they wittingly draw again the ſame danger upon their heads! will they not be perſuaded to prevent ſuch miſchiefs for the time to come! *The burnt Child dreads the fire.* We have been already burnt and almoſt conſumed in the hot fire of a Civil-War. Shall we caſt our ſelves again into it! or entertain the ſame cauſes that brought forth that ſad calamity! Our Enemies took occaſion to blow up the coals into a grievous flame, who knows but they are buſily employed about the ſame wicked purpoſes, and will caſt us headlong into the ſame miſery! why ſhall we be ſo fooliſh, ſo mad, and ſuch Enemies of the publick and of our ſelves and poſterity, as to aſſiſt the Jeſuits and Romaniſts in their grand deſign to ruin us and our Nation! This proceeding of yours may ſeem very ſtrange my Brethren, and may cauſe a greater wonder when we have ſeriouſly conſidered and proved it to you.

*See the Kings Portraiture.*

## CHAP. III.

*That there is no reaſonable cauſe of dividing from our Church, and that the moſt ſcrupulous Conſcience may and ought to conform according to the Laws of God as well as man.*

HAD you as good and allowable cauſes to alledge for your ſeparation from us, as we and our Forefathers had to depart out of the Idolatrous Church of *Rome*, your zeal would deſerve a commendation, and none could charge you with the Crime of Schiſm or Faction. For in ſuch a caſe you would have, in Conformity to the Examples and Command of Chriſt and his holy Apoſtles, forſaken thoſe who had firſt forſaken him, and divided your ſelves from thoſe abominations, whereof the belief and practice can never conſiſt with the Salvation of your immortal Souls. But though we and our Church are falſely aſperſed with Popery and Popiſh Superſtition, the Accuſation is falſe, and ſo ill grounded, that it would not deſerve a refutation, were it not that this ſtrange conceit is greedily entertained by many of our Non-Conforming Brethren. The accuſation is commonly delivered in groſs, becauſe there is none can juſtifie this charge by any particular inſtance. It is the common Practice and Art of Impoſtors and of abuſive Tongues, when they cannot make good the objected crime, to bring their accuſation in this manner, that their malice might be leſs diſcoverable, and their charge more weighty. But why ſhould we be declared to be Popiſhly affected againſt our wills; we diſown this charge as a grievous calumny, that hath no other foundation but the pride and unreconcileable hatred of our Enemies. Did ever any Church write more ſmartly againſt the Pope and Papiſts, than the Learned Divines of the Church of *England*? read over the thirty nine Articles, and Biſhop *Jewel*, and the Archbiſhop *Laud* againſt *Fiſher*, and in theſe our days read but the writings of theſe Learned Divines, of the preſent Biſhop of *Lincoln*, of Dr. *Stillingfleet*, and Dr. *Pierce*, and you ſhall find that none profeſſes to be greater enemies of Popery than we do. But methinks that this late Popiſh Plot and all the Papiſts endeavours againſt the Church of *England*, ſhould juſtifie us in the eyes of all the World better than any Arguments can, that we are not Papiſts nor Popiſhly affected: can we think the Papiſts, and

and Jeſuits who are not ſo eaſily miſtaken in their judgments of us, would have laid a Train to blow us up, had we been on their ſide! can we think them ſo blind that they cannot ſee their friends from their foes! would they offer to burn, deſtroy and kill us, and our Children, were we ſo inclinable to Popery, as our miſtaken Brethren falſely conceive! what mad men are you Prieſts and Jeſuits, Pōpes and Cardinals of *Rome*, thus to conſpire and ſpend ſo much Treaſure to deſtroy your own Brethren! Did you not underſtand all this while that we were all agreed! and that we are ſo near related, that we may ſhake hands! Why will you needs murder us and our Families for our Religion ſake, when we are as much or within a ſmall matter as much Papiſts as you? I am afraid I ſhall never be able to perſuade neither the Pope, nor his Jeſuits, that we of the Church of *England* are ſuch Friends of Popery, as you my Non-Conforming Brethren would have us to be. I ſhall be rather able to make them take us for *Turks* and *Jews*, than *Roman Catholicks*. Wherefore then will you needs accuſe us ſo falſely againſt all equity and probability? What do you find of Popery in us and our Church? Is it the Government by Biſhops and their Suffragans? It is poſſible that this Order eſtabliſhed in our Church may give occaſion to the weaker ſort to look upon us near a kin in this reſpect, becauſe they are miſtaken in the Notion of Popery, and in the chief and eſſential properties of that Religion. God forbid that all Monarchical Government in Gods Church on Earth, ſhould be Popiſh and Antichriſtian. Then we muſt include the Primitive Churches ſetled by the Apoſtles in *Aſia*, and the *Eaſt*, under the Government of Biſhops, to be Popiſh alſo. Then the *Grecian* Church under the Patriarch of *Conſtantinople*, The *Egyptian* under the Arch-Biſhop of *Alexandria*, and the *Antiochian*, and *Jeruſalem* Churches, and generally all the Churches of Chriſt in *Conſtantine*'s days and ſince, were Popiſh. Nay, all the Fathers, St. *Cyprian*, St. *Auſtin*, St. *Ambroſe*, St. *Chryſoſtom*, were Papiſts as well as we and our Biſhops, by that reaſon. For all their Churches were governed by Biſhops, and a Monarchical Authority.

*Hier. ad Macceb. & Aug.* in Pſalm 45.

The *Calviniſts* alſo whom you ſay are your neareſt Brethren, are alſo Papiſts, if this reaſon were good, for they with that they might have Biſhops to govern them in their reformed Churches, and that it could conſiſt with their ſafety in the midſt of their Enemies, to have the ſame form of Government, as we have here in this Land. Examin but their

Letters mentioned by Dr. *Durel*, and a Letter of *Peter Martyr* to *Beza*, at the end of his Common-places at his return from the Aſſembly of *Poiſſy* concerning the Biſhop of *Troye* in *France*, who embraced the Proteſtant Religion, and was univerſally received and acknowledged by all the *Calviniſts* in his Dioceſs, Miniſters and others, as their Lord and Biſhop. And you will have no cauſe to think them to be Enemies of Epiſcopacy, as the Papiſts and you would perſuade us, for divers ends. But there is a vaſt difference in the point of Church-Government, between the Papiſts and us. They render Homage to the Pope as the Supream Lord of the Church on Earth, we acknowledge none but Chriſt, and under him our Lawful Sovereign. They differ from us much in their Epiſcopal Laws which favour of Tyranny, and are not ſo conducing to the Reformation of mens manners, and the good of Chriſtianity as ours. The Name, Prerogatives and Honours of the Popiſh Biſhops, are for the moſt part yet continued to our Proteſtant Prelates, by the liberality of our Religious Kings. And is this the cauſe that you accuſe them of Popery? Do their Honors and Riches grieve you? Are you diſpleaſed to ſee the Rulers of our Church appear with decency, ſplendor, and the reſpect of their Country. I am perſwaded that if the Kings Majeſty would take from them their Lordſhips, their Eſtates and Dignities, and ſend our Biſhops amongſt you to beg their bread, as the Mendicant Fryers of *Rome*: though then they would be much more like the Papiſts, than they are at preſent; you would ſcarce take the pains to accuſe them for being Popiſhly affected. But I have this Charitable opinion of you my Non-Conforming Brethren, that you would never have thought to accuſe our Biſhops and their Church Government of Popery, had not the Jeſuitical Party, that inſinuate amongſt you, minded you of it for their own ends; and out of a diſpleaſure to ſee the excellent Order, Decency and Splendor of our Church free from the abominations of Idolatry, and their Monkiſh abſurdities.

*Peter Martyr*, pag. 801.

But that you may not be ſo ſoon miſtaken, my Brethren, in a matter of ſo great a moment as Popery and Superſtition is: I beſeech you to underſtand what Popery is, and what not, that you may not be ſo eaſily coſened and impoſed upon by your Enemies and ours in this Nation. Popery comprehends all thoſe Hereſies and grievous Errors, which the Pope and the Court of *Rome*, have delivered as Articles of Faith: by which

which the Popes Authority, or rather Tyranny is eſtabliſhed in the World, contrary to Gods Word and Glory, and the Salvation of mens Souls. According to this definition, if our firſt Reformers had retained the abuſes of Popery, the Tranſubſtantiaton, Purgatory, Images, the Merits of Saints, Indulgences, Pardons, and ſuch like follies, not warranted but contrary to Chriſt's Doctrines and Chriſtianity: you might then accuſe us with reaſon, of being guilty of Popery. But ſhall we for our Conformity to Chriſts Commands, and the Primitive Church in Diſcipline and Government, be accuſed by you of Popery, and Anti-chriſtianiſm. What is there in our Government or Church, that tends to promote the Popes Intereſt? or to draw men away from Chriſt, and our dependency upon him and his merits? If ſomething of the Civil Power be intruſted in the hands of our Biſhops, I hope none of you will preſume to appoint our Wiſe Princes, and Parliaments, whom they are to ſettle in Authority under them. That proceeds from our Princes Will, who is Gods Vicegerent amongſt us.

For our Articles, our Catechiſm, our Rubrick and way of Worſhip, is as free from Popery as our Government, and Eccleſiaſtical Laws. For how can that be Popiſh, which oppoſeth all the Errors and Miſtakes of the Papiſts, which Teacheth to implore Gods aſſiſtance and direction, againſt the Hereſies and Deſigns of the Pope; which was uſed in the Chriſtian Church before ever the Pope claimed an univerſal ſuperintendency? How can that be Popiſh which agrees with Gods Word, and the Doctrines and Practices of all the Reformed Churches, Enemies of Popery? and which their moſt Judicious Divines embrace as moſt conſonant with Faith and Piety. Search into every thing Authorized in the Church of *England*, and let the moſt refined Soul and quickeſt Eye, tell us under what Ceremony, or in what Article of our Faith, or in what corner of our Rubrick, or in what part of our Devotions, they perceive any Colour of Popiſh Superſtition. I dare affirm, and willl engage to prove, that moſt of our Non-Conformiſts are far more Superſtitious and Popiſh in their Belief and Practice, than any in the Church of *England*. In thoſe particulars in which your Conformity is required, What is there of Popery, of Superſtition, or contrary to Reaſon or good manners? For if there be nothing to be excepted againſt; Why will you not joyn with us your Brethren? You cannot be angry with Set Forms in general, becauſe Chriſt our Saviour recommended one to us, as an Excellent Pattern to draw ours by. You

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may be diſpleaſed at the reading of our Prayers, but if you will ſhut your Eyes they may ſeem to you as good, as if they had been pronounced *memoriter*. Grieve not to hear the ſame requeſts offered up, and loath not the ſame Prayers which you hear ſo often, becauſe you are pinched with the ſame neceſſities every day, and ſtand in need of the ſame God, and the ſame Bleſſings: and therefore may we offer up the ſame Prayer. In the matter of our Prayers, if any of you will ſhew us any thing contrary to Gods Will or Word, we will correct and daſh it out. Be not offended at the Croſs in Baptiſm, this was practiſed in Chriſts Church before ever Popery was known in the World, and is a ſignificant ſign uſed by the Primitive Chriſtians, to embolden and encourage us betimes to wear and receive the marks in our bodies, of Chriſts Holy Religion. Be not offended at our outward Reverence, which we expreſs at the mentioning of the Name of *Jeſus*: as we will not condemn you that omit this reſpect, judge not us that obſerve it, nor any other outward Action of the Aſſiſtants, will not be laid to your charge in the Publick Service of God, if you intend only Gods Honour. I know that meer Formality too viſible in many of our Conformiſts, and their apparent Contempt of the outward Devotions, diſcovered in their Actions and Behaviour, is a diſcredit to our Worſhipping of God, and a diſcouragement of our diſſenting Brethren. As therefore they ſhould take heed how they lay ſuch ſtumbling-blocks in their way, the others ſhould remember not to interpret every thing at the worſt ſence, and not to be diſtaſted at the excellent Prayers of our Church, becauſe of the prophaneſs of ſome perſons that aſſiſt at, or ought to be patterns of our Devotion and Piety. Likewiſe in the renouncing of the Covenant, why wilt thou be ſo ſcrupulous, or rather headſtrong, to maintain obſtinately the lawfulneſs of that which the Kings Majeſty, and the Wiſe Council of our Nation, have pronounced to have been an unlawful Oath, impoſed upon the Subjects againſt the known Laws of the Land. Have not we ſufficiently ſeen the wicked ſequels of this Engagement, or Combination? The Fruits that this Tree hath born, declare ſufficiently the Nature of it. We need not the Verdict of our Religious Governors, to underſtand it to have been an unjuſt Action, contrary to our Laws and Liberties: for we have ſeen our ſelves deprived thereby of both, by thoſe very perſons who required it from us. Why muſt we yet continue in our miſtakes? Neither are the words of the renunciation ſo ſtrict, but that any good Chriſtian, who intends but to demean himſelf

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quietly in the Government, may abjure the Covenant in the manner appointed, for we do but ſay that there lies no obligation upon us, or any other, to cauſe any ſtirs, rebellion or tumult, in Church or State. Did you therefore underſtand what is deſired from you, I cannot think but that every one of you, that is a good Chriſtian, would readily comply with ſo moderate a reconciliation.

But this Abjuration concerns only thoſe perſons of you, that enter into Offices and Employments in the Kingdom. And it is all the reaſon in the world, that ſuch as are intruſted with any publick Charge, ſhould promiſe, not to cauſe any diſturbance in that Government, in which they are employed, and by which they are ſecured and their Eſtates from Invaſion. Why muſt we be ſo fond of a *Scotch* contrivance, put into their heads by *Richelieu* and the Jeſuits, whom he ſent over purpoſely to overthrow the Glory of the Proteſtant Religion in *Europe*, the Epiſcopacy of the Church of *England*, and to caſt us into a confuſion, in revenge of our aſſiſting them of *Rochel* againſt their Prince.

It may be the whiteneſs of the Surplice offends thy weak Stomach, or Conſcience; and keeps thee at a diſtance from our way of Worſhip. But conſider, my Brother or Siſter, that Religion conſiſts not in colours, and wearing of Apparel: It concerns not thy Soul, if thou weareſt in Gods Service, White, Black, Green, Yellow or Red. If thou hadſt not a prejudice againſt this Garment, it would pleaſe thee as well as Black Gowns, and Cloaks with Capes. But is it not a ſad ſign that ſuch a trivial matter ſhall cauſe thee to caſt off all reſpect to thy God, and the Authority of thy Governours; and becauſe of a decent colour and habit, which thou doſt but fancy to be unbeſeeming, thou ſhalt refuſe all Communion and Correſpondency with thy Brethren on Earth, and I am afraid in Heaven too: For they ſhall be all cloathed in white Garments as Prieſts and Prophets, to offer up continually, the Sacrifices of their Praiſes to God. *Rev.* ix. 14. *chap.* iii. 4, 5; *chap.* vi. 11.

In ſhort, for I am aſhamed to mention and mind you, my Non-Conforming Brethren, of the uſual Objections againſt us and our Conformity, and the Childiſh cauſes alledged by ſome of you for your ſtanding at a diſtance from us, and refuſing all Religious correſpondency with us. I beſeech you weigh them all in equal Scales, without

partiality or prejudice, and you will find no reaſon to refuſe Conformity with us. I deſire you to conſider, that if your Children and Servants in your Families, did breed a diſturbance amongſt themſelves upon ſuch weak grounds, and for ſuch ſlight cauſes, did entertain quarrels and diſputes, to the diſquieting of your Houſes; would not you ſeek a remedy with a Rod, to make them more peaceable, and would not you diſmiſs ſuch unruly Servants, and take in others of a quieter diſpoſition? Would you not endeavor to ſilence their bawling, and when they canton in your Families, and divide it into parties in Contempt of your Authority and Commands, would you not ſeek to bring them together, and oblige them by ſome way, to reunite in One? This is the caſe of Chriſts Church among us in *England*; I look upon the Presbyterian and Independents chiefly with ſome other of the more moderate Non-Conformiſts, to be our Brethren, belonging to the ſame Family, Chriſt our Lord. for our Faith and Religion is the ſame in effect, moſt part of our differences are but trivial, childiſh and unreaſonable, about ſuch things which concern not the honor of the Lord of the Family, nor the publick intereſt, good, and preſervation of it; when conſidered in themſelves, And if there be any difference in our Religion between them and us, it is in ſuch matters as may be eaſily reconciled when well ſifted out, and are not of an abſolute neceſſity to the Salvation of mens Souls. Our happineſs depends not upon poſtures, geſtures, garments, colours, forms, croſſes, ſurplices, and other ſuch like things which are indifferent in themſelves, and were they not enjoyned, might as well be omitted as obſerved. It is therefore a ſhame for you to quarrel and break the Peace of Chriſt's Family, I mean his Church, about ſuch Triſles. No doubt but our wiſe Saviour will take ſome courſe ſpeedily, to diſcover to us our error, and chaſtiſe us for ſuch unreaſonable diſſenſions in ſuch matters, as we may eaſily comply with one another. I know your common Objection againſt us is, that in regard ſuch Obſervances, Cuſtoms, and Ceremonies, that breed a difference between us, are but trivial in themſelves, they ſhould not be impoſed upon you with that ſtrictneſs. In Anſwer to this, I intreat thee, my Brother, to conſider three things: firſt, that a Conformity to one way, one rule and manner in this Church is abſolutely neceſſary, for how unbeſeeming a thing it is, that one Congrega-

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tion ſhould practiſe one thing, another act in another manner, one Miniſter wear green, another yellow, another black, another gray, another white. If in one place were all ſinging, in another all preaching, in another all praying. How ridiculous would our Church appear to all the foreign Nations, if theſe things were allowed by Authority? It is therefore moſt certain that one way and one worſhipping our God, is abſolutely needful and becoming the wiſdom of our Nation. Secondly, conſider that the way and method eſtabliſhed by the Governours in Church and State, is not to be referred to the humor of every fancy, or of every diſſatisfied and private perſon: and that it is very reaſonable in ſuch caſes, as all acknowledge indifferent in themſelves, when one way is to be choſen, and others rejected, to take that which the publick Authority approves of, and agrees with their Judgment and Piety, whom God hath eſtabliſhed over us, and whoſe office it is to appoint ſuch things for us to obſerve and obey. Thirdly, conſider that trivial and indifferent things when ſtamped by the Authority of the Nation, ceaſe to be ſo, and become neceſſary to be obſerved. That which is indifferent in it ſelf, and but a trifle, is a greater invitation to you to practiſe it, and renders your ſtifneſs more inexcuſable, but in regard it is commanded by Authority, I am bound to obey. The indifferency ceaſeth, and I ſhould think it a crime, and a breach of Gods Law, *Of Obeying the Magiſtrate for Conſcience ſake*, If in things indifferent I preferred mine own partial humor, to the Commands of my Prince and Governors. And wonder not if they require ſo ſtrictly thine obedience and mine to theſe orders, becauſe in this licentious Age, men of corrupt deſigns take any liberty to diſpute againſt Authority, and contemn its injunctions, under the pretence of Religion and Conſcience. And becauſe this way and method ſeems to them the wiſeſt, whom God hath appointed over us to preſcribe it, in the worſhiping of God and moſt agreeable with Gods Glory, and the Nations Honor, Credit, and Advantage: Therefore there can be no Superſtition in them, to require our exact obedience to all the Rules which they judge to be juſt and beſt befitting our Piety, and in us to yield it in things indifferent in themſelves, as ſome fooliſhly imagin.

In all other matters which give you a diſtaſt, I know none but may be comprehended under this notion, and be looked upon as trivial and indifferent in themſelves. The deſigned compendiouſneſs of this *Seaſonable Advice* ſuffers me not to examin them all, nor to weigh all the objections that you are wont to make in juſtification of your Non-Conformity. But for thoſe that relate to our Prayers and publick Liturgy: I refer you my Chriſtian Brethren to a ſmall treatiſe now in the Preſs called *the Chriſtians Devotions and Directory in theſe dangerous times*, wherein I have laboured to clear and blow away all thoſe miſts that hide the truth from your diſcovery, and to give you ſatisfying reaſons for our practice, and for your benefit, with directions how you ſhall be able to prevail upon your averſeneſs, and bring your ſelves to receive a real and an inward comfort from our way of worſhipping. Unto the peruſal of that Treatiſe, I refer all thoſe that would receive better ſatisfaction in matters diſputed amongſt us.

Conformity, according to the Laws of the Land, is plainly required from every perſon. To ſet up therefore Meeting Places in oppoſition to Authority, and the Eſtabliſhed Service of God; is an apparent breach of theſe Laws. To haunt and frequent them under a pretence of receiving many Soul-comforts from the Learned and Godly Sermons, and Exerciſes of Piety, in thoſe prohibited Aſſemblies: is not warrantable in the Miniſter nor his Auditory, according to the Laws of the Nation. To withdraw from the Service of God under Epiſcopacy, and to leave off the Aſſembling with our Neighbours in our ordinary Churches: To forbear from Prayers, the Sermons of our Common Teachers, and the receiving of the Lords Supper, and the other Acts of Non-Conformity are likewiſe breaches of theſe Laws of men, eſtabliſhed by the Lawful Authority of the Nation, by the King and Parliament, and are ſo well known to be ſo, that I ſhall not offer to prove it.

The greateſt Queſtion is, Whether theſe proceedings of the Non-Conformiſts, be againſt Gods known Laws? I doubt not but they will all acknowledge that the falſe Accuſations, the wicked Surmiſes, the ſlanderous Reports, and the pretended Crimes of Superſtition, Idolatry, and their other uncharitable Cenſures of us and our Worſhip, by which we are diſcredited, Gods Holy Name abuſed,

and

and the ſincerity and integrity of our Chriſtian Governours and practices, miſrepreſented, are contrary to Gods Law. *Thou ſhalt not bear falſe witneſs againſt thy Neighbour.* It is a great injuſtice for them in hopes of advancing the intereſt of their Sects, to miſconſtrue our actions, to faſten upon us Crimes, to endeavour to diſcredit us and our Profeſſion; for beſides the wrong done to us their brethren, they blind the eyes, and lead into error and miſtakes, many poor ignorant and well meaning Souls, whereby true Religion is ſlighted, and Faction and Schiſm kept up, to the deſtruction of many perſons, and the diſhonour of our Reformation and Church. *Exod.* xx 13. 140. 11. *Pſal.* xxxiv. *Pſal.* x. 18.

But their other practices though never ſo well coloured in the eyes of men with pious pretences, are contrary to Gods Laws as well as mans Decrees. That this may better appear to you: conſider theſe following and undeniable Truths, gathered out of Holy Scripture.

I. That it is the duty of every Chriſtian, to ſeek as well as to pray for the Peace of Gods Church. *Pſalm* cxxii. 6. To endeavor to be at peace with all that profeſs Chriſtianity in Truth. 1 *Theſſ.* v. 13. That peace is a precious Jewel, which we ought carefully to ſeek and to preſerve. 1 *Pet.* iii. 11. That we ſhould abſtain from all thoſe practices that diſturb our Brethrens Peace. *Mark* v. 50. That we ſhould follow after the things that make for Peace. *Rom.* xiv. 19. That it is the property of heavenly wiſdom, to be peaceable, gentle, eaſie to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocriſie. *James* iii. 17. And many other paſſages, call us to mind in all our actions, the peace and publick quiet of the Church and People where we live. Now that Non-Conformity hath been the ſad occaſion of much diſturbance in this Nation, of Tumults and War, and that it continues to diſſociate our minds and intereſts one from another, to the general unquietneſs of this poor Church, is that which none can well deny.

II. That all unneceſſary and avoidable actions and proceedings, whereby ſtrife, debates, envy, hatred, malice and variance, are entertained amongſt men, are contrary to Gods Laws, and the Bleſſed Rules of the Goſpel. That teacheth to be like minded one towards another

another, chiefly in matters of Religion, *Rom.* xv. 5. To conſult in all our Actions, Love, Mercy and Charity, one towards another. *John* xiii. 34. Which teaches us to ſuppreſs all diſtatts, and to ſtudy to advance the univerſal unity of the Chriſtians, amongſt whom we live. 1 *John* iii. 1. and to abſtain from all actions whereby differences are maintained. 1 *Cor.* xiii. 4, 5, 6.

III. That we are to comply with all Rules, Rites and Ceremonies eſtabliſhed in the Church, if they be not directly againſt Gods Glory, or the Salvation of Mens Souls: or, if they be not expreſly forbidden in Gods Holy Word, or contrary to it. This is confirmed to us by Chriſts own Example, who conformed to the harmleſs and indifferent Injunctions of Men, to avoid all ſingularity; for in the Celebrating of the *Paſchal Lamb*, he eat it not ſtanding as *Moſes* commanded, but lying down upon a Couch, *Matth.* xxvi. 20. *Mark* xiv. 18. He cauſed a Hymn to be ſung, which was a Jewiſh Ordinance. Chriſt alſo conformed himſelf to the Synagogue-Worſhip eſtabliſhed amongſt the *Jews* by an Human Authority, which our Bleſſed and peaceable Saviour was ſo far from diſapproving, that he expreſly tells his Diſciples, that they who had made that Ordinance *ſit in* Moſes *Seat, all therefore whatſoever they bid you obſerve, that obſerve and do.* Matth. xxiii. 2, 3. And in many other particulars of as high an importance as thoſe which cauſe you, my Non-Conforming Brethren, to ſeparate from us, this Divine Saviour teacheth you by his good Example, to avoid ſingularity, to obſerve the Rules and Orders appointed in the place where you live; and not for ſuch matters as endanger not in themſelves your Salvation, to cauſe that diſturbance that will infallibly indanger the Churches Peace and Unity, and beget in your Souls thoſe paſſions, vices and diſtempers, which are not agreeable with our Chriſtian Religion, and preſent intereſt, or our future hopes of Salvation.

IV. That all diſobedience to the Magiſtrate in things not contrary to Gods Word and Will, is unlawful and forbidden by S. *Paul*, *Rom.* xiii. 1, 2. *Let every Soul be ſubject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be, are ordained of God. Whoſoever therefore reſiſteth the power, reſiſteth the ordinance of God: and they that reſiſt, ſhall receive to themſelves damnation.* A paſſive obedience is not ſufficient where an active is required, and may and ought

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to be yielded. And though you do not actually reſiſt at preſent the Civil Magiſtrate, all Non-Conformity is a kind of reſiſtance; take heed therefore that by this oppoſition, you render not your ſelves liable to the Curſe, and ſo deſerving the Damnation that is ſo ſeverely threatned. In the third Chapter to *Titus*, verſe the firſt, he deſires him to put his people in mind to be ſubject to Principalities and Powers, to obey Magiſtrates, and to be ready to every good work. And to the *Hebrews* St. *Paul* ſpeaketh more pertinently to our purpoſe, Obey them that have rule over you, and ſubmit your ſelves, for they watch for your Souls, as they that may do it with joy and not with grief, for that is unprofitable for you. And St. *Peter*, 1 Epiſt. Chap. ii. verſ. 13. calls upon you, *to ſubmit your ſelves to every Ordinance of Man* without the exception or diſtinction of Civil or Eccleſiaſtical matters, and that *for the Lords ſake, whether to the King as Supream, or unto Governors, for ſo is the Will of God.* Are theſe Commands of any force or Authority with you my Brethren? Are you not thereby required to Conform to the Laws, Rules, and Conſtitutions of Gods Church amongſt us, enjoyned by Authority? are not theſe Ordinances of Men which you ought to ſubmit to? Therefore none of you can refuſe an obedience to them, without violating Gods Laws, and breaking the Sacred Rules of the Goſpel. I could inſtance many other Examples, Precepts, Commands and Entreaties, out of Gods Holy-Word directed to you, to wiſh, require, and deſire you to be at Unity and Conformity with us your Brethren, eſpecially in the Publick Worſhip of God; and to ſet aſide all prejudice and partiality, whereby you are hindered from ſeeing and embracing the Truth. What is it therefore that keeps us at ſuch a diſtance? Is it your Conſciences? How can your Conſciences oppoſe Gods Word and Will? Is it Conſcience that obliges you to be irregular in your practices, and reject us as Prophane and Idolatrous, who labor in all reſpects, to be conformable to the Holy Precepts of the Goſpel? Is that Conſcience in a word that teacheth you to be diſobedient to the Laws of God and Man? And to breed a diſturbance in a Church and Kingdom for ſuch frivolous and idle matters, to the encouraging of our Enemies againſt us, to conſpire the ruin of our King and Countrey? For Gods ſake as well as for your own ſakes, and for Religions ſake, and the happineſs of your Poſterity, deceive

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not your ſelves, and think not to deceive God and man with this childiſh and empty excuſe. Let me tell you what I conceive to be the true cauſes of your obſtinate Non-Conformity to the Church of *England*, for the reaſons commonly alledged of Conſcience, of Popery, Superſtition, and the unjuſtifiableneſs of our Government and Liturgy by Gods Word, are but meer pretences and empty excuſes, to cozen the weaker ſort, and to colour theſe following cauſes of our unreaſonable Non-Conformity, in the Eyes of the World.

## CHAP. IV.

### *The true cauſes why moſt part of our diſſenting Brethren will not joyn with us in the Worſhip of our God, enquired into. In what particulars our differences chiefly conſiſt, and their grand Objection, Anſwered.*

IT is the uſual cuſtom of all malecontents, to pretend one thing and to intend another, and to veil over the fouleſt Actions with the moſt glorious covering, in imitation of the grand Impoſtor who appears to us commonly in the garb of an Angel of Light. Thus *Korah* and his rebellious Confederates, who ſeparated themſelves from *Moſes* and his Congregation, pretended the Peoples Holineſs and Priviledge, and the Rulers Tyranny, for their dividing from them. Thus *Abſalom*'s Ambition was veiled over with a deſire of doing juſtice more carefully to Gods People, and freeing them from a tedious Attendance at *David*'s Court. Thus *Jeroboam* the wicked Son of *Nebat* pretended the eaſe of the People for his Idolatrous Worſhip. Thus the Quakers, Fifth-Monarchy, Anabaptiſts, and many of the worſer ſort of Separatiſts, whoſe Souls and Underſtandings God hath given over to a ſtrong ſpirit of deluſion, to believe Lies and to work Abominations, have their excuſes for their own follies and errors, and to juſtifie their leaving of us. But theſe I judge for the moſt part to be in ſo deſperate a caſe, that without a Miracle of Grace, it is not poſſible to ſnatch them out of the claws of that commanding

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Spirit that governs them. This advice is deſigned for the peruſal of a more moderate ſort, and of more reaſonable Souls, more tractable and ſociable, who embrace the ſame Faith with us, and expect the ſame Salvation by the ſame means, the Merits of Chriſt and good Works. Theſe alſo have their pleas and excuſes to hide that which is not juſtifiable by Gods Word and right Reaſon, *Their not Conforming with us in the ſervice of God and Duties of Religion.* But whatever be their pretence, theſe are the true cauſes of their obſtinacy, and our unhappineſs.

The firſt and chiefeſt are *Prejudice* and *Partiality*, proceeding from Education, a long cuſtom in, and an acquaintance with that irregular way, which they are ſo fond of. Theſe are wont ſtrangely to prepoſſeſs mens minds, and blind their judgments againſt the moſt apparent diſcoveries of Truth. The late Uſurpation and Anarchy in the Church, let in another Government, and other Orders, unto which many that are accuſtomed, cannot ſo readily prevail upon themſelves to embrace, what they fancy to be contrary, chiefly in ſo delicate a buſineſs as Religion, in which their ſincerity makes them conſtant and faithful to the meaneſt circumſtance. But I would entreat you my Brethren to rectifie your miſtakes by a diligent enquiry, for we deſire you not to forſake your Religion, but to profeſs the ſame according to that moſt excellent manner, that the Wiſeſt and moſt Religious Governours of our Kingdom, have thought fitting to preſcribe to us. Search into our Belief and Practices, and ſee that we agree as well as you with the Holy Records of Gods Word, we have the ſame Faith, the ſame Sacraments the ſame God and Saviour, the ſame initiation, and we are deſigned for the ſame End and Glory, what a pitty it is that we ſhould be divided in the way! Beſides, all the occaſions of your prejudices proceed from miſtakes, and miſapprehenſions of us. Therefore for the prevention of this evil, take not things too much upon truſt, but give your ſelves the ſatisfaction to examin our way, and the reaſons we give for that which you object againſt us; converſe with us in our Devotions, and think not that you ſhall be denied to pray with us to the ſame God. If your tender Conſciences will ſuffer you to hearken to reaſon, and to aſſociate your ſelves with us in our Public Worſhip: I am perſuaded that all prejudice and partiality will ſoon vaniſh at the clear Sun-ſhine of the

Goſpel preached, and ſincerely taught amongſt us. You ought therefore to be jealous of that which ſeems to be your Conſcience, which is for the moſt part nothing but Humor, ſtrengthned by a long continuance. And if your Conſcience hath been wrought upon to act againſt truth, good manners, the glory of God, and intereſt of Chriſtian Religion, you muſt labor by Prayer, and the aſſiſtance of others of your more enlightned Brethren, to find out the miſtakes of your deceived Conſcience. For I cannot conceive but that many of the well meaning people amongſt you, are governed by their Conſciences, and frighted with ſecret remorſes from the juſteſt actions agreeable to Gods will and word. For when an inveterate prejudice hath poſſeſſed the Souls of men, it blinds their judgments, it hardens their hearts, it ſtrengthens their reſolutions, and cauſeth Conſcience it ſelf to ſooth them up in their Error. So that they are not eaſily reconciled to the moſt apparent Truths. An Example we have in the Phariſees of old, whoſe obſtinacy in oppoſing Chriſt and his Goſpel is moſt remarkable; as therefore this plea is not allowed by Gods word in ſuch caſes, I would adviſe every good Chriſtian to have ſome other reaſon ready for his Actions, than bare and naked Conſcience, which is ſo apt to deceive our ſelves and others in this corrupt Age.

II. Others of the ſimpler and more hypocritical ſort, are kept in their Non-Conformity, by an inclination to ſingularity, and a deſire to gain the reputation of being more preciſe and more religious than their other Neighbours; as if that were the only way to ſeem religious to men, to caſt off all reſpects to the Religion of the Countrey; as if they had no other means to purchaſe this eſteem, but by their contempt of the ordinary Acts of Devotion, and of the Society in Gods worſhip, of the common people. This folly is entertained by too many of thoſe, who have more regard to the outward garb, than to the inward reality, and are more afraid of defiling themſelves with other mens ſins than their own. Theſe pretend the wickedneſs of the times, the viciouſneſs of ſuch as aſſiſt at Prayers, and publick Acts of Piety: and it may be the Miniſters weakneſs in manners and abilities, as juſt cauſes of their ſeparation from us, however they think thereby to anſwer their end, to oblige others to look upon them as more Holy and Angelical than thoſe, whom they deſpiſe, whiles their hearts are full of hatred, malice, envy, pride, vanity, and

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many times you may perceive in them the Devil of Hypocriſie, that hath a worldly intereſt to manage by this fond conceit of preciſeneſs, with which the poor Soul endeavors to deceive it ſelf and others, for that intent as the boaſting Phariſee of the Goſpel. To cure this kind of Lunaticiſm in Religion. I would adviſe the diſtempered to ſeek but into their own Souls, and underſtand themſelves better, and it may be they would find there more cauſe to lament at their own corruption, than to exclaim againſt the viciouſneſs of others; I would adviſe them to take heed of being more ſevere againſt their ſinful Brethren than God, and to conſider that by partaking with the vileſt of men in Holy Duties, thou art not partakers of their negligence, prophaneſs, and other Crimes, unleſs thou followeſt their vicious Examples: That thy Piety and Humility will be ſo much the more acceptable to thy God, and pleaſing to men in a publick Congregation, the more it excels the reſt of the Aſſiſtants: That other mens unworthineſs ſhould be ſo far from ſcaring thee from performing thine obligations to God and his Church, that it ſhould animate thee the more with an inclination to promote Gods glory, and keep up his worſhip in the eyes of the world, with that due reſpect and reverence, which other men neglect in their conſtant attendance upon this Holy Ordinance: And that it is a moſt ridiculous perſuaſion, to fancy thy ſelf able to obtain the eſteem of Holyneſs, by the omiſſion of the duties of Religion, and by a ſcornful neglect of the incouragements of Holyneſs and Piety.

III. Another cauſe of many of our Brethrens refuſing a Conformity with us in our worſhipping of God, is a too zealous affection for a Party, or for the Name of a Party unto which they have devoted themſelves. This factious humor proceeds out of ſome diſpleaſure conceived againſt us, our perſons or our way, or out of a propenſity for that Party which they embrace in oppoſition to us. And many times they are ſo fond and blind, that they give not themſelves the trouble to examin the differences between us, but reſolutely embrace Presbytery or Independency, and addict themſelves to theſe empty names for no other cauſe nor reaſon, but becauſe they have an inclination for the Sect, or only for the Name of the Sect. I dare appeal to the judgment and inquiry of the more reaſonable perſons amongſt them, whether this be not the cauſe of the ſeparation of many from

us ? I am perſuaded that moſt of them know no real difference between us and them, but only in the outward form and garb; they underſtand not what Presbytery and Independency are, and yet they are in appearance ſuch rigid Presbyterians and Independents in their outward behaviour, that by no means will they be perſuaded to comply with us in the leaſt punctilio. Theſe are commonly the greateſt Enemies of Unity, who are thus led on by blindneſs and ignorance. They are the moſt unreconcileable ſlanderers of our Worſhip and Government; upbraiding us with the Miniſters viciouſneſs, the People's formality, and other trivial matters, which diſcover more hatred than reaſon, in their carriage to us. To this kind of Non-Conforming Brethren, whom St. *Paul* checks for their carnality, I recommend that Chriſtian moderation, which the ſame Apoſtle wiſhes to the *Corinthians* and his other Diſciples, and to remember that their furious Devotion for their ſeveral parties, agrees not with that Devotion, which they ſhould have for Peace, for Religion, for their Chriſt and his Intereſt. That their eſpouſing of a Factior, divorces them from this good Saviour, and renders their Souls unfit for a Communion with him here, or hereafter. And that they ſhew themſelves to be the greateſt Enemies of Truth and Concord, when they thus engage themſelves deſperately in the encouraging of a Party, without underſtanding the depth and deſigns of it. No doubt but if theſe men had but as ſincere an inclination for Truth, and the Publick Peace, they would be as averſe to their Sects, as they are now forward to promote the intereſt of them.

IV. Another ſort are preingaged by a worldly intereſt, and kept from a compliance with us, for fear of croſſing or loſing that advantage which they reap from a Non-Conformity, or from their Acquaintance with the Non-Conformiſts. Too many I underſtand are kept from hearkening to their Reaſon and Knowledge, of the Lawfulneſs of our Worſhip, and their Duty to God and Man; by that bewitching thing Seeming Intereſt. But ſuch men value more their preſent profit than their future hopes, and prefer the vanities of the Earth, to the unſpeakable advantages of Heaven, which they might reaſonably expect from an obedience to Gods Laws. Their condition I reckon to be very deſperate; for however they may look upon this Sin with contempt, or think their refuſal of joyning with

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us deſerves leſs blame, becauſe they ſide with our Brethren of the ſame Religion, yet in regard that they ſtand in oppoſition to us, and diviſion is thereby encouraged in Chriſts Church: This their ſin of Non-Conformity is ſo much the more hainous, becauſe they know their Duty, and refuſe to practiſe it, for fear of parting with an advantage which they might probably loſe, did they forſake their Faction and Party. I would intreat theſe men to weigh the words of our Saviour, directed to ſuch Idolaters of worldly intereſt: *He that denies me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in Heaven.* And to remember that Chriſt is ſeemingly denied, when we refuſe Communion with ſuch, whom we know to be real Chriſtians, and a compliance with that Lawful Worſhip, which is agreeable with his Word and Will.

V. Another hinderance to the Non-Conformity of ſome of the more Learned and Wiſer ſort, are thoſe who either think themſelves ſo or deſire to be ſo eſteemed, is *Shame.* The ſhame and reproach of the world, which they juſtly deſerve for complying too much with the irregularities of former times, cauſeth them to continue conſtant in their Errors, for fear of confeſſing their guiltineſs by a change, though for the better. I conceive that their judgments were then over-ruled by the Authority and Currant of the times, and perſwaded to condemn that Government and Worſhip, which Rebellion was reſolved to pull down, being inſenſibly drawn in to ſide with that Enemy of our Laws and Liberties. Now therefore, that this ſame Government and Worſhip is by Gods good providence reeſtabliſhed; they are aſhamed to confeſs their former weakneſs, to diſcover any unſetledneſs in their minds; they chooſe for this purpoſe rather to perſiſt in their miſtakes, than to acknowledge them by a recantation. Such men conſider not that obſtinacy in Errors is a great aggravation of a Crime, and that to confirm now wilfully and reſolutely, in oppoſition to Law, and the dictates of their Conſcience, what the neceſſity of the times forced them to ſubſcribe to, is a moſt hainous ſin, near related to that of the Holy Ghoſt. However our Saviour Chriſt highly condemns ſuch men, *in the Goſpel according to S.* John, Ch. xii. verſ. 43. For *loving more the praiſe of men, than the praiſe of God.* For having a greater regard to the approbation of their former diſciples, than to be approved of by God, for their ready compliance with

their duty and his Divine Laws. Truth is to be always acknowledged by all the Diſciples of Truth, and may be denied in little matters as well as in great; but in matters of Religion, of the publick Peace, of the Service of God, and the Unity of Chriſts Church, every Truth is of a great importance; to ſtand ſtifly in the denyal of it, to refuſe a compliance with it, to oppoſe it obſtinately, and continue in that oppoſition till death, is a wickedneſs that I judge to be unpardonable before God, as it is inexcuſable before men. Such perſons to ſave their credit, care not how they damn their Souls: and for fear of the reproach of men, run themſelves into the danger of forfeiting their God and happineſs, together with their intereſt in his Church by a wilful ſeparation. I intreat theſe my Brethren to take heed how they deny, or oppoſe that which they know to be Juſt or True, for the God of Truth is a revenger of all oppoſition to it. A ſmall liberty that men give themſelves in an error or a vice, hardens them in it, and draws them inſenſibly into greater and more hainous, and the longer men continue in them, the leſs able they are to repent and amend.

VI. Some of the wiſer ſort were firſt perſuaded to oppoſe the Church of *Englaad*, and to refuſe Conformity to its late eſtabliſhment, becauſe they had been fierce and unadviſed diſputers and contemners of it, during the late Uſurpation. And now they would not comply, not ſo much for fear of reproach as the former, but for fear of endangering the Faith of their diſciples, or for fear of prejudicing their eſteem of Religion, by ſhewing ſo great a readineſs to comply with the times; for they imagin that their people will be apt to ſuſpect the truth of Chriſtianity, when they who are the chief Teachers of it, diſcover any unconſtancy in the moſt viſible part of it, which is Gods Publick Worſhip. The apprehenſion therefore of doing that which might bring an open ſcandal to Religion, prevailed upon ſome of the more conſcientious Teachers, of the Presbyterian and Independent parties, to refuſe Conformity to the reeſtabliſhment of the Church of *England*. Theſe ſeem to be more excuſable than any of the reſt, becauſe their care of Religion obliged them to refuſe a compliance, together with the miſtakes of their Congregations, for though they found nothing in the Government of the Church by Biſhops, and in the things enjoyned, but

but what they could readily embrace, as agreeing with Piety and good manners, and the exacteſt Rules of Gods Holy Word: yet becauſe thoſe whoſe Souls and Conſciences, they were to have a regard to in all their actions, were prepoſſeſſed by the wickedneſs of former times, with ſuch invincible miſtakes againſt this Church, that they could not be perſuaded out of them upon a ſudden; if all their Teachers had forſaken them at the alteration of the Government, they might have indangered the intereſt of Religion in their Souls, and given them ſtrange prejudices againſt the Holineſs and Purity of Chriſtianity, eſpecially in theſe prophane days, in which men are too apt to imagin it only a *Politick Contrivance*: and the rather they would have entertained this wicked conceit of Gods Religion and Truth, if their Teachers, whom they looked upon as their Examples of Piety, and men of great Learning for the moſt part, ſhould have entertained without any demur, thoſe very things which they or others, but a few years before exclaimed againſt as impious and idolatrous, and were generally believed to be ſo. The People who commonly take things upon truſt, without giving themſelves the time to examin their miſtakes, would have wondered to ſee men ſo unconſtant in their behaviour, ſo changeable for the preſent advantages of life, to embrace ſuch ſeeming impieties, repugnant to their blinded Conſciences. Therefore they thought they could do no leſs than comply with their Peoples weakneſs, rather than with the Authority of the Nation; and chiefly becauſe their People expreſſed a willingneſs to ſupply their neceſſities by their liberal contributions. The Holy Apoſtles of our Saviour Chriſt, ſeemed to have been in the ſame caſe after the preaching of the Goſpel, the Converted *Jews* were willing to embrace Chriſt and his Doctrine, but the Laws of *Moſes* they were not willing to forſake, becauſe they and their whole Nation had ſo great a Devotion for thoſe Ceremonies, which they looked upon, to be perpetual and obligatory to their Nation, in regard of Gods Covenant: that they could not be induced to neglect them, though Chriſt and his Apoſtles had ſhewed them the intent of them all, which was but to keep them in expectation of their Saviours coming, and the Revelation of the Goſpel Myſteries. But when the Apoſtles ſaw no poſſibility of drawing the *Jews* from their *Moſaical* Obſervances, they connived at them, who embraced Chriſti-

Chriſtianity, and took that courſe which might further their acceptance of Chriſts Religion. So far were they from diſſuading them from it, that they themſelves yielded to all ſuch obſervances, that they might not ſcandalize the reſt, though they were fully acquainted with their inſignificancy. By this compliance with the Nations miſtakes and the Peoples weakneſs, which they were reſolved to continue till Chriſtianity had gained a ſufficient credit amongſt them: they minded two things, *Firſt*, The avoiding of all Controverſies and diſſenſions, which might have riſen to diſturb the Publick Welfare, from the Phariſees extraordinary Devotion for their Law. *Secondly*, The taking away of that, which would have proved the greateſt obſtacle amongſt the *Jews* to the progreſs of Chriſts Religion, if its firſt reception had commanded them to forſake *Moſes* and his Ordinances, by which the Prieſtly Order was maintained in its ſplendor. But for the better encouragement of Chriſtians, they ſuffered *Moſes* to uſher in Chriſt, and the People to profeſs Judaiſm and Chriſtianity together, before they would venture, to call them away from thoſe carnal Ceremonies, which ended at Chriſts Death and Paſſion. In proceſs of time, St. *Paul* to the *Hebrews* ſhews them their emptineſs and inſignificancy, and adviſes them at laſt, to leave the ſhadows, ſeeing they enjoyed the Subſtance and the Body.

I could heartily wiſh, that as many of the Learned and Conſcientious Teachers as amongſt our Non-Conforming Brethren, have imitated the Apoſtles in their compliance with the peoples weakneſs, for the avoiding of Scandal and Religions ſake: would now at laſt imitate them in their ſecond endeavors, to undeceive their people, now that they are all ſo well acquainted with us and our worſhip by ſeveral Diſputations; that none but thoſe whoſe Eyes are wilfully ſhut, can conceive any ſuch uncharitable opinion of us; That we are Popiſh and Superſtitious in the Service of God. Now that they all ſee that the Pope creeps not in amongſt them under our white Surplices, and is not hidden under our ſuppoſed Altars, nor that our Religious Prayers uſher not in the Antichriſtian Maſs. Now that the Holineſs of our Religion, the ſignificancy of our Ceremonies, the Integrity of our Laws: In a word the Excellency of our Church Order and Worſhip, are viſible to all the Nation: It would become

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the Wiſdom and Chriſtianity of thoſe Learned and Wiſe Teachers of the Presbyterian and Independent parties, to perfect what is already begun, and to encourage an union with us. The ſame care of Religion which obliged them firſt to comply with their Peoples miſtakes, calls them now to perſuade them out of them, leſt theſe miſtakes ſhould gangrene in their Souls through their encouragement, and turn to the ſubverſion of our Church, and the Proteſtant Religion in this Nation. I am certain that now Chriſtianity and the Souls of theſe men, are in greater danger through your compliance with them, my reverend Brethren, than they would be if you did gently deal with them, to ſhew them the lawfulneſs of our practices and worſhip, and perſuade them by word and deed to joyn with the approved forms and eſtabliſhed Service of God in this Nation. For now their obſtinacy is no longer weakneſs but wilfulneſs, no longer Conſcience but Reſolution and Averſion. You know ſufficiently how dangerous it is to nouriſh them up in an abhorrency of Truth, and to encourage them in a diſpleaſure againſt the Profeſſors of it. You know how contrary to the bleſſed diſpoſition of Chriſts Diſciples, their temper is, who are not to be reconciled with us and their own duty, by all the Reaſons and Commands of God and Man. You know, and may eaſily diſcover in your uſual hearers, if you pleaſe to give your ſelves the trouble, ſeveral wicked vices, as pride, ſelfconceitedneſs, hypocriſie, hatred, malice, envy, *&c.* which their Non-Conformity alone hath bred and nouriſhed in their Souls. You know that the bleſſed rules of the Goſpel, and the ſweet temper of Chriſts Religion, requires from you another diſpoſition, and other carriage than many of you, and moſt of your followers expreſt to us your Brethren, and your Chriſtian Governors. If you have a ſincere regard to Religion, and a deſire to advance Gods Glory on Earth; you will at laſt endeavour a reconciliation, for fear of the miſchiefs which our ſeparation from one another is like to bring upon us all. Remember that a compliance with your Peoples Non-Conformity, is no longer ſeaſonable, in regard of the obſtinacy of thoſe that continue in it againſt all Law and Reaſon. You have ſufficiently complied with their humors, do you now comply with your obligations to God, and Man: you have had a care of the ſalvation of their Souls, now look to the preſervation of your own, and run not your

ſelves into the remedileſs ſin of a wilful denial and oppoſition of God's truth to the laſt. The Apoſtles in their yielding to the Jewiſh miſtakes, laboured always to make them ſenſible of their Error, by minding them ſtill that *Moſes* Ceremonies were not needful to be obſerved, and at laſt told them plainly, That they were a denyal of Chriſts coming in the Fleſh. It would become your Learning and Integrity, my reverend Brethren, to deal thus plainly with your Congregations; if you would be true followers of the Holy Apoſtles. Tell them that Conformity to the Church of *England* is no ſuch a Crime as they have imagined, that they are bound to obey Mans Laws when they are not contrary to the Commands of the Goſpel; That they ſhould be reconciled with our Worſhip and Church, and ſtrive to Conform as near as they can to what is required from them; Tell them that Schiſm and Separation from the approved way, is a grievous ſin. That their Souls are in danger of Damnation by reſiſting and diſobeying the lawful Commands of their Superiors under God. That they ſhould take heed of not perſiſting obſtinately in their errors, and not to refuſe obedience to the leaſt Command of the Goſpel when diſcovered to them. Tell them to be more in love with Truth than with Faction, more deſirous of meeting with the reſt of their Brethren in Gods Worſhip, than fond of their private and unlawful meetings, where the Goſpel may be Preached, it is true, becauſe it is in oppoſition to their other Brethren, and to the Authority of the Nation, they are not warrantable by Gods Word. Tell them in ſhort, that the Bleſſed Goſpel of our Saviour as well as his Intereſt and our Glory, requires us all to joyn and unite together in all Acts of Piety on Earth, that we may avoid the Devils temptations and be more fit to unite together in Heaven, to ſing praiſes to our great God and Redeemer. Our Bleſſed Saviour, who is dead for you as well as for us, and is gone to prepare a place for us in the glorious Manſions of Eternity, intends not to receive you by your ſelves, and appoint your aboads diſtinct from the reſt of Chriſtians: why are you ſo ſcrupulous or ſo ſuperſtitious, as for trivial matters now to divide from us in that Worſhip which is to prepare us for Gods preſence. O my Brethren, did we but conſider how ridiculous our Nation appears to our Neighbours, and to the Bleſſed Angels

*Galat.*

Angels above, and how pleaſing our Diviſions are to our Enemies of *Rome*, we ſhould doubtleſs bluſh for ſhame to have hitherto encouraged a ſeparation ſo childiſh and ill grounded, for no other cauſe but the humor and miſtakes of the vulgar ſort, ſeeing that it renders us liable to the reproach of Men and Angels, and cauſeth us all to be in danger of the ruin of our worldly intereſt, and what miſchiefs it cauſeth to the Souls of men do you judge. If the reſpect to Religion be pretended, examin whether this pretence can avail againſt an apparent Duty, or excuſe you from a ſubmiſſion to the Laws of God and Man, examin whether at preſent you draw not more evil upon the heads of your Followers, and Religion it ſelf, by an oppoſition to Conformity, than you would by yielding to Reaſon and Law, and to your Chriſtian obligations.

I know that ſome prophane and vicious perſons refuſe to be conformable for other reaſons, becauſe they have caſt off all reſpects for their God and Religion. I know the Jeſuits and the diſguiſed Papiſts amongſt you, will not Conform to our Church, but exclaim againſt our Religious Worſhip, becauſe they have a wicked deſign to manage the ruin of the Nation: But I intend not theſe lines for their benefit and peruſal, but only for ſuch of our Non-Conforming Brethren, whoſe hearts God may at laſt move with a ſence of their duty to joyn with us in Gods Service. They that hereafter ſhall refuſe, and continue in an obſtinate refuſal, and in their uſual clamors againſt us may juſtly be ſuſpected for Papiſts, or ſome hired to promote the Jeſuitical deſign, the overthrow of Church and State. Were the differences in Religion between us in the Fundamentals, a Separation would be well grounded. But we all agree in the chief Articles of our Faith, we embrace together the ſame Religion and Belief, we worſhip the ſame one God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, and expect Salvation through the Merits of a Crucified Chriſt, we ſubſcribe to the ſame Covenant of Grace, and acknowledge but two Sacraments as Seals, we look upon the Holy Scriptures, as the only infallible Rule of our Faith and Practice; In a word we agree in all the eſſential parts of the Chriſtian Religion, many of the circumſtances in which we diſagree are ſo inconſiderable, that if we had not an earneſt deſire to contend, they would not be able to cauſe any diſpute, much leſs to diſturb the publick peace.

The chief differences are about Church Government, and Gods Publick Worſhip, for the latter they are ſo frivolous, idle and impertinent, that I ſhall ſay no more in vindication of our practices, than hath been already ſaid, but for the Government we agree in the chief Principles and Maxims, though we differ in the concluſion. For we all ſay that in all Church Governments amongſt Chriſtians, that there is a regard to be had to the Models allowed of and appointed by the Holy Apoſtles and Primitive Fathers, That the Rules of the Goſpel ought not to be oppoſed but obeyed in the preſcribing of Laws for the preſervation of Chriſtian Societies. That in all Church Government there is a ſpecial regard to be had to the end of all Government, which is the ſafety of the whole to keep it from the attempts of all Enemies and dangers. That this may cauſe a variety in Kingdoms and Nations, agreeable to the Government in the State, to the nature and inclinations of the people and ſeveral other circumſtances which are to be weighed in this Caſe. That a Government eſtabliſhed in a Nation by the publick Authority, if not contrary to Gods Word and Will, ought not to be reſiſted by Chriſtian Subjects. That every individual Believer muſt not preſume to cenſure and murmur againſt the appointed Order in Church or State, or meddle with the Princes Office and Power. That the Government in the Church belongs to the Sovereign Prince under God, as well as in the State: and that it is a dangerous preſumption for every private perſon to venture to contradict the Laws, which ſuch Lawful Princes think convenient in their wiſdom to ſettle in a Church: in theſe and ſuch like truths, I ſuppoſe moſt of our Non-Conforming Brethren will agree with us. But nevertheleſs, the Presbyterian will be governed by his Presbytery and Lay-Elders, in a ſubordination to Aſſemblies and Synods. The Independent will acknowledge no Orders in the Church but what are appointed in his Congregation, and both refuſe Obedience to Epiſcopal Authority, though ſuitable to the former Rules and Maxims: Epiſcopacy recommends to us in Gods Church a Monarchical Authority, Presbytery would have an Ariſtocratical mixed with Democracy, the Independent pleads for a Democratical. To what purpoſe is this adoe about Government? it concerns not our Salvation in caſe we behave our ſelves juſtly, righteouſly, and ſoberly, in this preſent world: in caſe

caſe we can but lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godlineſs and honeſty. As this is the chief duty of every individual Chriſtian, it ſhould be our endeavour and purpoſe in all our actions. The Presbyterian forſook Epiſcopacy, and thought to mend his condition under that Government, he gave an Example to the Independent to forſake Presbytery with hopes of living with more eaſe in a new Government, never heard of in the Primitive Church, unleſs it be amongſt Hereticks and Enemies of Gods Truth, for the eſtabliſhing of this ſtrange Order in this Church, they lay down moſt dangerous Doctrines, contrary to Gods Word and all Reaſon; for inſtance, That every Chriſtian upon the account of being ſo, a real Chriſtian, a good man, and a Believer, may be no member of Chriſts viſible Church, and is not bound to joyn in external Communion with it where it may be had. That a ſuſpicion or a bare perſuaſion of ſin in the publick practices commanded by Authority, is ſufficient to free both Miniſter and People from their Obedience, and Licenſe them to Act contrary to the ſame. That Chriſtians are not ſubject to Eccleſiaſtical Laws, unleſs they be contained in the Holy Scripture. That men may be Chriſtians without any ſubjection to Authority, or dependency upon Chriſts Church. And ſuch like Doctrines directly contrary to Chriſts great deſign in mans Redemption, which S. *Paul* tells us was Union, That he might reconcile all unto God in one Body by the Croſs. I would have theſe my Brethren know, that as man was created in reſpect to a Society, he is alſo redeemed with the ſame relation, for we cannot think that this good Saviour hath freed him from ſin and the Devils power, to live by himſelf for ever as a wild Anchoret in the Deſart, and Mountains; he hath enlightned his followers with that ſpirit, and given them thoſe principles that tend to Union and Communion. Therefore St. *Paul* ſaith, in 1 *Cor.* xiv. 33. That God is not the Author of Confuſion but of Peace, as in all the Churches of the Saints, What means the Apoſtle by *Peace*? is it that every individual Chriſtian ſhould be ſcattered upon the face of the Earth, and upon the leaſt ſuſpicion or ill grounded prejudice abominate all correſpondency in the Publick Worſhip of God, that

Separation no Schiſm, *in oppoſition to an excellent Sermon of that worthy Divine, Mr.* Sharp.

*Epheſians* ii. 16.

he ſhould look upon his brethren redeemed by the ſame bloud, governed by the ſame ſpirit, and animated with the ſame hopes, with a ſupercilious countenance, and fly from them as from a Wolf or a Devil. Yet theſe are the conſequences of ſome of the Independent principles. But I ſuppoſe it no difficult matter to reclaim moſt of them from ſuch pernicious opinions, which have proved as deſtructive to their private Congregations, as they have to the Church of *England*, for they tend to encourage diſorder, and to licenſe men to caſt off all reſpects to all Governours and Government of what ſort ſoever. But methinks if we had that honour for our Nation as becomes us, and as other people have for theirs, we ſhould not be more fond of the new modes in Government and Gods Worſhip recommended to us by our Neighbours, and impoſed upon us by a Scotch Frolick, than of the antient and wiſe method and Government eſtabliſhed amongſt us by our Forefathers. Why muſt the new fangles and faſhions of ſtrangers affect us more than the diſcreet conſtructions of our own Chriſtian Rulers? Though the people of our Nation alter often their habits, methinks in ſo ſerious a buſineſs as Religion, Government and Gods Worſhip, we ſhould not be ſo changeable as we are in our apparel.

I know the rigid Independents are accuſed for denying the appointed maintenance to Miniſters, *Tythes*, the encouragement of Learning and Gods Service; they are accuſed for not allowing any ſet forms of Prayer, not ſo much as the Lords Prayer, for not admitting any to the Ordinances but ſuch as are of their own fraternity, for denying the Magiſtrates Power over the Godly, for allowing the killing of all oppoſers. But theſe wicked Doctrines I ſuppoſe are not maintained by the moſt moderate Independents, who differ from us chiefly in the Government of the Church: in all other things it is likely that they may be brought to comply with us, though at preſent they give themſelves the liberty to abuſe and carp at many other innocent circumſtances of the Religion and Worſhip of the Church of *England*.

*See Mr.* Baily's Diſſuaſive from the Errors of the times.

I find my ſelf engaged in this place to give a Reply to a grand Objection againſt this Advice, and call to Conformity which ſeems to be allowed by St. *Paul*, in his Fourteenth Chapter of his Epiſtle

to

to the *Romans*, and which is commonly pleaded as an excuſe by our Non Conforming Brethren. *That they extreamly ſuſpect our practices and worſhip to be ſinful, and therefore they are not bound to act againſt a doubting Conſcience, by joyning with us in that which they conceive to be unlawful.* Agreeable to S. *Paul*'s words in another occaſion and caſe, *He that doubteth is damned if he eat, becauſe he eateth not of faith, for whatſoever is not of faith is ſin.*

This paſſage is but a weak Plea for Non-Conformity in *England*, for the *Romans* caſe and ours differ in theſe particulars. Their Controverſies were concerning the aboliſhed Ceremonies of the *Jews*, or the prophane practices of the Heathen Idolaters, ours are about the Lawful, Decent, and Religious Ceremonies of Chriſtians. Their Controverſies were about ſuch matter, as were in themſelves ſcandalous, as eating of things ſacrificed to Idols, partaking with the Idolaters in a Heathen Temple, or obſerving the *Faſti* and *Nefaſti*, days of good or ill luck, according to the *Roman* perſuaſion: but our Diſputes are for ſuch things as all acknowledge to be harmleſs and innocent. The *Romans* were newly Converted to Chriſtianity, and therefore many weak in Faith were not to be diſcouraged by the liberty other men allowed themſelves, we in *England* methinks ſhould be well grounded and ſetled in the Chriſtian Religion, and not to be diſcouraged from its Profeſſion by every triſle. The things in Controverſie were never enjoyned, or looked upon by the Rulers of that Church as fit to be practiſed, and of any decency in Gods Worſhip, our matters in diſpute are approved by the Authority of the Nation, and every true hearted *Engliſh* Soul, is bound by the undeniable Laws of God as well as by Mans Laws, and for the credit of the Nation, as well as for the preſerving of publick Peace and Unity, to Submit and Conform. Do you think in Conſcience, that in our caſe if S. *Paul* did live amongſt us, that he would bid you not Conform, *Becauſe you are damned if you Conform doubting.* He that tells you in the former Chapter, verſ. 16. *Be of the ſame mind one towards another. Mind not high things, but condeſcend to men of low eſtate. Be not wiſe in your own conceits.* And in the fifteenth Chapter, verſ. 5. *Be ye like minded one towards another, that ye may with one mind and with one mouth glorifie God, even the Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* Think ye that he would have opened ſo wide a gap to Non-Conformity,

formity, and to the ſiniſter deſigns of Apoſtats and Hereticks. Think ye that he would have given this liberty to diſturb the Churches Peace, to theſe Sons of Tumult and Diviſion, to tell them that a groundleſs ſuſpition of ſin in the practices of the Church, or the bare pretence is ſufficient to juſtifie their irregularities, diſorders, ſchiſms, ſeparation and diſobedience to the Commands of their Superiors, He that tells you *that ye muſt needs be ſubject for Conſcience ſake*, would he have ſaid that a naked excuſe, or a meer immagination of ſin in the things enjoyned, frees you from all ſubjection, and gives you liberty to diſobey the Magiſtrate in indifferent mattres. Are you to prefer your wilful ſuſpitions or groundleſs fancies, to the declarations of your Brethren and Chriſtian Rulers, to imagin ſin in that which they think not only lawful, but alſo needful to be practiſed. This General Rule *Whatſoever is not of Faith is Sin*, verſ. 23. is miſapplied to our caſe, and is not to be allowed as a lawful excuſe for the omiſſion of an apparent duty, for there are none of our Non-Conformiſts but might eaſily attain to that Knowledge and Faith, which might juſtifie their Unity with us. Were they living amongſt the Canibals or in the darkneſs of Popery, or Heatheniſh Idolatry, where none were able to remove their doubts, to ſatisfie their minds, and inform their Conſciences, this plea might be ſo long allowable till they were able to gain more knowledg. But for them to ſhut their eyes to all the beams of light, and their ears to all the Reaſons, Arguments, and Perſuaſions, of the Doctors of the Church of *England*, and to ſay we are blind, we don't believe, we are not perſuaded, and therefore our Conformity without Faith would be a ſin, is a moſt ridiculous pretence, unto which meer neceſſity drives them who are obſtinately reſolved to the contrary. Suppoſe a Heathen or a Papiſt ſhould have had the ſame advantages as you have to underſtand the Truth, and as ſtrong invitations to make profeſſion of the Goſpel, would you allow them this pretence to excuſe themſelves from embracing the Goſpel? Why did not the Presbyterians and Independents approve of this Plea in thoſe whom they caſt out of their Aſſemblies for Religions ſake, and would not admit them to communion? Men muſt take heed in this corrupt Age, of ſuch general Rules which the Devil is wont to wreſt, to promote his

*Calig. aut in Sole, Quircill.*

his own wicked purpoſe. But in this caſe you will ſay what ſhall we do? what courſe ſhall we take? for our Conſciences have gotten ſuch a command over us and our judgments through ſuch like perſuaſions, that we can enjoy no peace within our breaſts, if we comply with you, in things ſo contrary to our principles. We are as much afraid to hear your prayers, as to worſhip before an Idol of Stone or Timber, to ſee a white Surplice, as to aſſiſt at Maſs, to have a Croſs upon our Childrens foreheads as to receive the marks of the Beaſt: In a word, we are as much afraid to ſubmit our ſelves to your Worſhip and the Government of Biſhops, as to Apoſtatize from Chriſt, and forſake Chriſtianity. This fear and theſe perſuaſions cannot eaſily be overcome, what advice therefore would you give us that we in this caſe, might take that Courſe, which may agree in ſome reſpects with our obligations to our Superiors, and favour us a little in our weakneſs, that we may not do any thing to diſturb the peace of our Conſciences, which you ſay are miſ-led.

## CHAP. V.

### *Seaſonable and Chriſtian Advices for our Non-Conforming Brethren, who are poſſeſſed with ſuch ſtrong prejudices againſt the Church of* England, *that they cannot eaſily overcome them: and a Reconciliation propoſed.*

I Will freely grant what you would have us believe, that you are afraid by a compliance with our Church to wound your Conſciences, or to act contrary to your perſuaſion, which you think to be well grounded: and that by ſuch a proceeding you ſhould diſturb the quiet of your Souls, as when Conſcientious men commit a ſin againſt Gods Laws. Yet my Brethren in this caſe your reſolved Non-Conformity is not warrantable, nor agreeing with Chriſtian prudence, becauſe your Superiors to whoſe Judgments, Reaſon and Duty, teaches you to yield a little, condemns it as prejudicial to the publick: and becauſe it is ſo apparently deſtructive to Peace and all

Chriſtian vertues which Unity and Uniformity in Religion are wont to nouriſh in a Society. Therefore in this caſe for your own quiet and the publick Peace, I adviſe you my Brethren to obſerve a medium between a ſtrict Conformity and a Non-Conformity, until ſuch time as you can be better informed, and to practiſe theſe following Rules, which will infallibly give your Souls and Conſciences ſatisfaction, and anſwer in ſome reſpects your obligations to your Superiors under God, as well as ſecure the publick peace of the Church. However I am certain you are bound by Gods Holy Word to obſerve theſe Rules; that though the caſe were as you ſuſpect, I am certain, that if you will govern your ſelves by them, your Non-Conformity, will be leſs dangerous to your Souls, more excuſable before God, and leſs hurtful to the Nation.

I. Abſtain from all diſreſpectful words, ſlanderous reports, baſe aſperſions, and railing accuſations, and unworthy imputations of our Government, Worſhip and Orders of the Church. Suffer not your ſuſpicions of ſin to break out into an open injuſtice and filthy language. If your judgments be infected, defile not your tongues with the ſame pollution. Let a Chriſtian moderation bridle in that liberty, which men commonly give themſelves, of ſpeaking any thing againſt that which they cannot phancy, and let not your miſtakes appear farther than your own Souls. This reſtraint is moſt juſt, reaſonable, and agreeing with the paſſages of Gods Bleſſed Word, for it is but juſt that you ſhould abſtain from abuſing that Church and Government, which ſecures your Lives and Eſtates, from which your Forefathers and many of you, have received the advantage of being Chriſtians; It was a great ingratitude in one of the Sons of *Noah*, to reveal and ſport himſelf with the ſight of his Fathers Nakedneſs. It is as great an ingratitude in the *Engliſh* Subjects, and deſerves as ſevere a Curſe, to blaze abroad and delight to publiſh in every Company the ſuſpected nakedneſs of their Mother the Church of *Eagland*, from whoſe Breaſts they have ſucked many benefits. It is very remarkable that when the Children of *Iſrael* were going into the Land of *Canaan*, to live amongſt the Heathens, God gave them this Commandment for the preſervation of the publick Peace of his People, which would have been broken, if they had by their unhandſom Language, ſtirred up the Heathens jealouſie for the Honour of their Gods. *Thou ſhalt not revile*

*revile the Gods, nor curſe the Rulers of thy People.* Exod. xxii. 28. They differed in eſſential matters of Religion, yet God would not ſuffer his People to rail againſt thoſe falſe Divinities, leſt that might diſquiet and diſturb the publick tranquillity. And for that very cauſe when the *Jews* were in Captivity in Babylon, *Jeremiah* ſent them a Letter by Gods Command, *To ſeek the peace of the City whither they were carried away Captives, and pray unto the Lord for it, for in the peace thereof ſhall ye have peace*, Jerem. xxix. 7. The *Jews* were Gods People, the *Babylonians* were Idolaters, yet God would not ſuffer them to defame or ſpeak any thing, which might hinder the peace of that Kingdom. Likewiſe it was obſerved by the Town-Clerk of *Epheſus*, in his harangue to the People in their uproar, *That the Chriſtians were neither Robbers of Churches, nor yet Blaſphemers of the Goddeſs* Diana. Acts xix. 37. And the Heathens could commend the Chriſtians for their moderation, and diſcretion in this reſpect. And is it juſt, that you my Brethren, ſhould be continually reviling and blaſpheming that Worſhip and Religion, whereof the eſtabliſhment renders ye quiet in the poſſeſſion of your Eſtates: That Religion and Worſhip, againſt which you have nothing but Suſpicions, and not ſuch Allegations as the *Jews* had againſt the *Babyloniſh*, and as the Chriſtians had againſt the Heatheniſh Religion. Our Peace I confeſs is not diſturbed in that manner as theirs had been, had they treated the Heathens as many of you do us; for you have to deal with thoſe Chriſtians, that look upon you as Brethren, and can ſuffer affronts and diſgraces with patience, but our moderation excuſes not the violent and uncharitable expreſſions and blaſphemies too much in uſe amongſt the indiſcreeteſt of our diſſenting Brethren. Whatever therefore be your thoughts and ſuſpicions of us, let your words be modeſt, and let them ſavour of that Chriſtian Charity which we ſhould entertain for one another.

*Juſtin Martyr.*

II. Seek not to propagate your diſpleaſures againſt our Church and Worſhip, nor to gain Proſelytes to your Sects. You have but ſuſpicions of ſin to lay to our Charge, no real Accuſations, no open Idolatry, nor plain Superſtition to faſten upon our Church and Worſhip: though this ſuſpicion as you pretend, is ſufficient to excuſe your Non-Conformity, it may not have the ſame effect upon others; that

which is but a ſuſpicion in you, ſhall aſſuredly be an Article of Faith in a Diſciple, for Error like the Snow-balls increaſeth the farther it goes. Education and Cuſtom will cauſe your Children to abominate, what you look upon to be tolerable, if you bring them up in an averſion for it. It is obſerved concerning hereticks and miſtakes in Religion, that their Diſciples were far more the Children of Hell than their Maſters, and more violent and more extravagant in their deviations from the Truth. It is therefore very dangerous to draw into the ſame groundleſs ſuſpicions unexperienced Souls, who are apt to improve miſtakes to the diſturbance of the publick and their own damnation: If therefore you will not be in love with your prejudices, take heed how you bring up your Children in ſuch perſuations, as may haſten their ruin and the Nations calamities. And if you cannot prevail upon your ſelves to forſake your opinions, be not ſo fond of your diſtemper to communicate it to others, but encourage them in the performance of their duties.

*Matt.* xxxiii. 15.

III. Give not credit too unadviſedly to the ill reports that concern the Church and its Government, for there is nothing that increaſeth ſo much the diſpleaſure againſt it, as that wicked policy of our Adverſaries. They miſrepreſent us to the people, and deal with us as the Jeſuits in *Spain* do with the Proteſtants condemned to the fire, they cloath them with Paper Coats and Caps, all covered over with ſhapes of Devils and ſtrange chimera's to render them more frightful to the vulgar ſort: thus do our ſubtil enemies cover us over with the figures of Devils, Idolatry, Superſtition and Crimes, which when well examined will appear to be only the effects of their malice rather than expreſſions of our deſervings.

IV. Search with diligence into the differences between us, take the aſſiſtance of Gods Holy Word, inquire into our Practices and Belief, and by Prayer endeavour to underſtand the Truth, that you may learn to practiſe it. We dare appeal to the Judgments of the moſt moderate of you, we are no ſuch Idolaters as ſome would have. There is nothing of Superſtition enjoyned in our Church: we will be tried by Gods Word, and the ſound interpretation of the Holy Fathers, Read over Mr. *Hooker*'s *Eccleſiaſtical Policy*, commended by our Royal Martyr. Read his Opinion of our Church Worſhip and Govern-

Government in his incomparable Book. His judgment is worthy to be looked upon. *I have ever eſteemed*, ſaith he, *the Church of* England *the beſt Profeſſion of Religion, becauſe it comes neareſt to Gods Word for Doctrine, and to the Primitive Examples for Government.* Read Biſhop *Bancroft*, *Downham*, *Hall*, *Bilſon*, *and* Dr. *Taylor againſt Presbytery, in Vindication of the Church of* England. Read our later Diſputations about the matters in queſtion between us, &c. In a Letter to the Prince of *Wales.*

V. Draw as near to us in your Religious Worſhip, as your Conſciences will ſuffer you, endeavour to aſſiſt at Prayers, and if you can have no Devotion inwardly, however expreſs outwardly that reſpect, that is due to your God whom we adore. Whatever you pretend, I cannot think any of you ſo extraordinary miſtaken as to think that a Crime, which we reckon a Duty, and ſo Superſtitious as to ſcruple at an attendance with us in our Service of God. If therefore you be willing to attain to a freedom from all thoſe niceties, and fears, be frequent at the publick Prayers of the Church. If you cannot at firſt have any Devotion, this frequentation will ſoon bring you to a right reliſh of thoſe Petitions, and that way of Worſhip, and the ſooner, if you will obſerve the motions of the Body enjoyned in the Common-Prayer; for this ſubmiſſion and this cuſtom will have a ſpeedy influence upon your minds, and cauſe your Souls to joyn in the ſame reſpects to God. Certain it is that the nearneſs of relation between the Soul and the Body, will beget a mutual compliance between the Actions of the one and the Affections of the other; ſo that the often practiſing of things muſt needs reconcile us to thoſe performances, and remove the ſtrongeſt prejudices which are not grounded in reaſon, nor ſtrengthned by Divine Revelation, nor any worldly intereſt, which in this cauſe ought to have no hand. If therefore any weak Brother cannot at preſent comply with the Devotions of the Church of *England*, if he finds an inward repugnancy for our publick Prayers, which hinders him from receiving that benefit and comfort thereby intended: Let him follow and try my advice but a few months, let him force his Body to obſerve all the motions of reſpect commanded in the Rubrick: let him ſtand up when we give glory to God and ſing forth his praiſes; let him kneel

in Prayer, and outwardly obſerve a due Reverence, and he ſhall find that his former averſion will inſenſibly wear away, and by degrees he will bring his Soul to a hearty and Religious compliance with our godly Forms of Prayer, which before he could never uſe with any ſatisfaction to his mind: He ſhall find his unhappy humor of diſcontent evaporate it ſelf, and his Body draw after the Soul and its faculties to a ſincere worſhipping of our good God, in the manner that is practiſed amongſt us. This and many other directions to this ſame purpoſe I recommend to your peruſal, my Brethren, who are willing to be cured of all prejudice againſt our Church and Worſhip, you ſhall find them in my *Chriſtians Devotions and Directory*, now in the Preſs.

However I would adviſe you, for your own and the Churches Peace, to draw as near as you can to us, and be frequent in the offering up of the Prayers of the Church, for this propinquity will both acquaint you with the innocency of our practices, and free you from all thoſe idle and needleſs apprehenſions of ſin, which a diſtance from us begets and nouriſhes in your minds.

Many other Seaſonable Advices I could give you to the ſame purpoſe, but the compendiouſneſs of this Tract ſuffers me not to enlarge.

If you were deſirous of a reconciliation, there are ways to be found out to bring us all together: And though we ſtand at ſuch a diſtance, and entertain ſuch unreaſonable animoſities againſt one anothers perſons and practices, I dare engage to offer to you my Brethren, ſuch propoſals as may agree with moſt of your Conſciences, and with the honour of our Church, and the Majeſty of our Laws, with a little mitigation. Our Governors no doubt will be willing to embrace ſuch amongſt you as lead a good Life, and to encourage your Conformity by all poſſible means. Neglect not this motion but anſwer it with a Chriſtian compliance. You ſhall find us all both Clergy and People, ready to receive you, for we have in this Nation ſuch Worthy, Wiſe, Learned, and Chriſtian Rulers in the Church, as no Nation can ſhew the like: nor was ever our Church better furniſhed with able Divines, skill'd in all kind of Learning, nor more remarkable for their Wiſdom, Piety, and Moderation. You ſhall find our Biſhops for the Publick Peace of the Church, ready to con-

condeſcend to your weakneſs in all ſuch things, as ſhall agree with their Conſciences, the honour and good of the Church, and the preſervation of his Majeſties Authority.

This Nation was never bleſſed with a more merciful, mild and more gracious Prince, more willing to be govern'd by Law and Reaſon, an Enemy of blood and violence. You ſee that he bears with your infirmities, ſuffers you to take that liberty in matters of Religion, which the ſeverity of the Law condemns. His goodneſs and excellent diſpoſition is an invitation to you: Abuſe not his Royal Favors to your own prejudice and the publick wrong; Let his Reign be Bleſſed with an accommodation of thoſe differences, which have involved us already in unſpeakable Miſeries and woful Tragedies.

Some of our Governors need not be adviſed to a Chriſtian moderation, and a kind reception of the weak Brethren. This Noble and Seaſonable Vertue hath gained the greateſt part of conſiderable Towns to Conformity, and won them the eſteem of all their people. For though it is not ſafe to comply with Schiſm and Faction, by falling away from our Duty, and the obſervance of the Laws, there is a wiſe behaviour in requiring obedience with meekneſs and Chriſtian complacency, which prevails more upon the minds of men, than that furious zeal which would have fire to come down from Heaven upon all oppoſers.

*The preſent Biſhop of* Bath and Wells, *by a kind and generous behaviour, hath done much good in* Taunton, *amongſt the Nonconformiſts.*

I dare ingage to you, my Non-Conforming Brethren, if you will diſcover the leaſt forwardneſs to this bleſſed Union: All the Biſhops, Clergy, and good People of the Land will rejoyce, and that ſuch conditions ſhall be granted to you, which Reaſon, Conſcience, and your own Intereſt will require you to accept. O that you would therefore all deſire and ſeek for this Union with us in Gods Holy Worſhip, and thereby ſecure the publick Peace of the Church, the proſperity of your King and Country, from all wicked attempts of Barbarous Enemies. O that you would but prefer this your intereſt of your Soul and Body, and the indiſpenſable obligations to the Laws, to your own unadviſed phancies or the jealouſies of blinded and deluded Conſciences.

I ſhall therefore conclude this Seaſonable Advice, with an Addreſs, to you the Chief Leaders and Teachers of theſe our Brethren.

## CHAP. VI.

### *An Exhortation to all the Learned, Pious, and Chriſtian Teachers amongſt our Non-Conforming Brethren, to prevent in time the Nations ruin, by an Unity with us; and to lay aſide all Prejudice and Partiality.*

WE look upon many of you to be men of great Learning, and Exemplary Piety, ſome of you by your Religious Works, have gained an eſteem amongſt all the Reformed Churches: your Lives are ſaid to be anſwerable to your Doctrines. Many are enlightned, inſtructed, and perſuaded from ſin by your Teaching: as therefore a *Roman* ſaid of a good man on the contrary ſide, *Utinam*, I could repeat the word a thouſand times, *Utinam noſter eſſes*, would to God that you and we were but one, would to God that you would joyn with us, and be perſuaded to unite in one Religion and Worſhip.

Mr. *Baxter*'s Works.

The multitudes that throng at your Aſſemblies, look upon you alſo to be men that make Conſcience of your ways. By your Preaching they ſee that you are not ignorant of the Holy Scriptures, and of the Revealed Will of God. What can they conclude from hence, and your abhorrency of us, but that you muſt be more quick-ſighted than they are, to ſpy an Error in our Worſhip and Prayers, ſomething of Idolatry, and unlawful to practiſe, which cauſes you to ſeparate from us for fear of a defilement. I know ſeveral perſons that this conſideration alone hath prejudiced ſo far againſt us, that they have told me and cannot be perſuaded to the contrary, *that there muſt needs be ſomething of Superſtition in our Church, for otherwiſe ſo many Learned men would never ſtand at ſuch a diſtance from us*, others have caſt all the fault upon your Conſciences, as if your Conſci-

ences

encies my Reverend Brethren, were to be blinded and miſtaken in ſo plain and clear a buſineſs; *What is free for me to practiſe*, ſome have ſaid to me, *it may be other mens Conſciences cannot allow.* Your pious behaviour, and good lives in the eyes of the world, ſtrengthens them in this charitable opinion of you, and ſiniſter opinion of us and of our Church, ſo that they look upon us as formaliſts, temporiſers, men-pleaſers, worldlings, and our Rulers as Perſecutors, to Enact thoſe juſt Laws, which tend to the preſervation of the Nations Peace, and Honour. For Gods ſake begin now to undeceive them, ſuffer not your people to continue for ever in their dangerous miſtakes, which nouriſhes envy, hatred, malice, diſpleaſure, and keeps them in that hainous and crying Sin before God *Schiſm*, which cauſed once the Earth to open her infernal jaws to devour the firſt Authors of it alive. *Numbers* xvi.

Your Danger I conceive is greater than theirs; for all the ſins that they are guilty of by their ſeparation, and the vices nouriſhed in them by this diviſion, will be charged upon you by our great Judge at the laſt Tribunal. And why will you load your ſelves with other mens Crimes? Have you not miſcarriages enough of your own to Anſwer for? Were it not for you and your Religious Carriage, all your people would be eaſily perſuaded to liſten to Reaſon and their Duty to the Church. But as you have hitherto kept up the Faction for Reaſons that we may chance to be ignorant of; Now let me tell you, that you indanger both the Bodies and the Souls, the preſent and the future intereſt of your Congregations: If you will yet ſtifly refuſe a Compliance and an Union with us your Brethren. You ſee the condition of this Nation, the malice and deſigns of our Enemies, the danger that hangs over our heads; you ſee what advantage our diviſions in Religion are likely to give them, how they endeavour to keep us aſunder, and laugh at our follies and needleſs diſſenſions: why will you befriend the Pope and his Papiſts? why will you yield them your aſſiſtance, and employ your Gifts and Talents, to advance Popery amongſt us, and ruin your People and their Poſterity? Don't you think, that theſe quarrels between Proteſtants, have increaſed the number of Atheiſts and Papiſts? It hath been the uſual reaſon employed by their Jeſuits to delude poor Souls into their Damnable Religion, to

tell them, that we amongſt our ſelves were not well agreed, what Religion to chuſe; and that thoſe of the Reformed Religion were always jangling about Fundamentals. And how many prophane and looſe perſons have been glad to catch at this occaſion, to excuſe themſelves from obſerving the Laws of God.

Beſides, conſider what danger thoſe poor Souls are in that are your auditors, whom though their converſation is plauſible before men, the Devil holds faſt by thoſe ſtroug bands of iniquity, prejudice, pride, ſingularity, hatred, envy, ſchiſm, &c. and drags to Eternal damnation without Repentance and the Merits of a good Saviour. Open your Eyes therefore my Beloved Brethren, look to your own, your Congregations, the Nations, and the publick danger: and the Lord of his Mercy open your Hearts to have ſome compaſſion of them and your ſelves, that you may bring a ſpeedy remedy to theſe diſtempers in the Church, which will never be cured withou you.

I commend the Jeſuits in *China*, for their wiſdom and diſcretion in complying and joyning with the Proteſtant Merchants in all Duties of Religion, and they with the Jeſuits in the parts of Gods Worſhip which are lawful, however they abſtain from all Diſputes, and Quarrels about Chriſtian Religion, before the *Brahmans* and the Heathens, leſt that the differences in Religion might not appear to them and hinder their embracing Chriſtianity. Cannot we obſerve the ſame policy? we have much more reaſon than they, our differences are not conſiderable. Ceaſe therefore to canton your ſelves, and keep up your Factions. Why will you for worldly intereſt or any carnal end, bring Chriſts Church in *England* to utter ruin? If you cannot be ſenſible of the Nations danger, by that which I have already repreſented, Conſider that in the late hurly burly in the Weſt, upon a falſe Alarm of the *French* being landed upon the Coaſt of *Dorſet-ſhire*, ſome of the fierceſt Presbyterians and Independents, or ſuch at leaſt as pretended that Religion to excuſe themſelves from an attendance upon the Publick Ordinance, had combined together to plunder the Houſes of Rich Miniſters, Gentlemen and Wealthy Farmers, if there had been any Truth in the Invaſion.

My Reverend Brethren, I beſeech you for the Lords ſake, conſider ſeriouſly this particular, that will diſcover to you the preſent diſpoſitions of our diſſenting Brethren, and the future dangers of

their

their Dividing from our Church. Animoſity is increaſed to that height in their Souls, that the Bleſſed Rules of the Goſpel are not regarded, that the Laws Human and Divine will be trampled under foot, that Plunder, Robberies, and Maſſacres, will be the end of your teaching many of them not to joyn with us. I cannot think that any of you will approve of ſuch wickedneſſes as theſe, yet theſe you may ſee to be the fruits of our Diviſions in frivolous matters of Religion. I know your zealous Teaching hath had better effects upon more Conſcientious Souls: but under the Skirts of your Sects, you know many Hypocrits and Villains ſhroud themſelves, to act their evil purpoſes under a more plauſible Covert. Harbor not ſuch Enemies as theſe, encourage them not in their diſſenting from us, but lead them by your Examples and Teaching, at leaſt to an Obedience to our Laws and Government in the Church and State, and to an outward Conformity to the Worſhip of our God amongſt us, according to St. *Pauls* Exhortation to you, in the Second of his Epiſtle to the *Philippians*: *If there be any conſolation in* Chriſt, *if any comfort of love, if any fellowſhip of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies; Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the ſame love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

THE END.